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Advanced Communication Skills

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Advanced Communication Skills
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ISBN 978-87-7681-661-2

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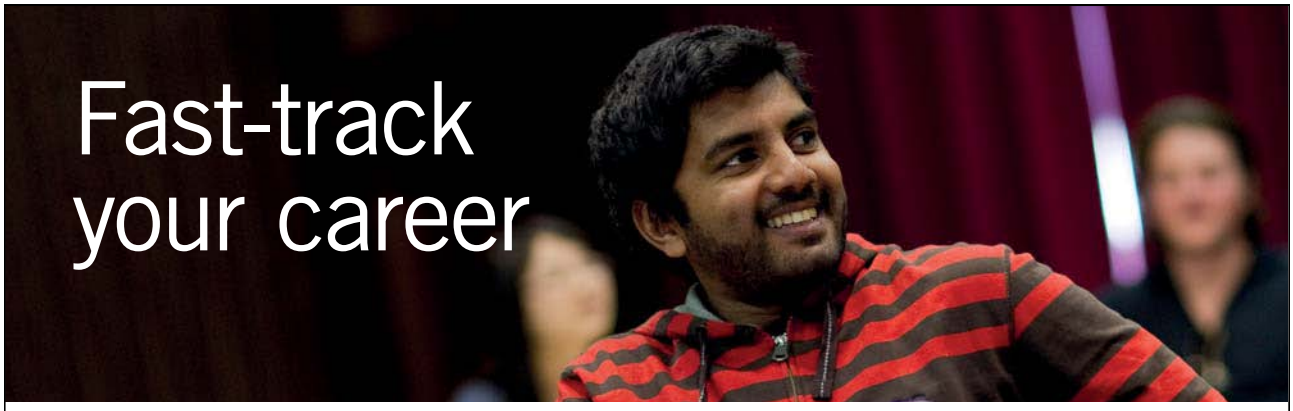

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Preface

Are you looking to take your communication skills onto the next level?

Do you want to be able to tap into other's wavelengths be able to influence at will?

Have you ever wondered what the master communicators do and how they seem to make it look so easy?

In this textbook you'll will take your communication skills to another galaxy! You'll discover how people think, how they process information and what goes on behind the scenes (i.e in everyone's brain) so you can tailor your communications to get what you need and the desired outcomes.

Sean McPheat, the Founder and Managing Director of management development specialists, MTD Training is the author of this publication. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications as a thought leader within the management development and training industry.

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MTD provide a wide range of management training courses and programmes that enable new and experienced managers to maximise their potential by gaining or refining their management and leadership skills.

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1. Introduction – Advanced Communication Skills

1.1 The Importance of Communication

All human interactions are a form of communication. In the business world, nothing can be achieved without effectively communicating with employers, employees, clients, suppliers, and customers. If you look at the most successful business people in the world, you will see people who have mastered the art of communication. And that's the difference between being a good communicator and being an advanced communicator – advanced communication is a true art form. It requires practice, finesse, and a skill set that goes beyond those that the average person possesses.

> Advanced communication is a true art form, requiring practice, finesse, and a skill set that goes beyond those that the average person possesses.

Even though communication skills are so important to success in the workplace, there are many individuals who find that there is a limit to their communication skills and that they seem to have reached a stumbling block in their progress. They may sometimes struggle to convey their thoughts and ideas in an accurate manner, making it difficult to reach their full potential as a communicator, a manager, and a leader of others.

However, there is hope for anyone who finds advanced communication to be difficult. These skills can be practiced and learned. It takes learning about how communication works, how to communicate exactly what it is you want to say, what mode of communication is best, and what factors are influencing the ability for you to send and receive messages with acumen.

1.2 What Is the Difference between Communication Skills and Advanced Communication Skills?

When asked to define communication, how would you respond? Most people will relate to the forms of communication – talking or listening. But communication goes beyond that. Communication involves getting information from one person to the other person. Yet even this is not a complete definition because communicating effectively involves having that information relayed while retaining the same content and context. If I tell you one thing and you hear another, have I communicated?

> Communication is the art and process of creating and sharing ideas. Effective communication depends on the richness of those ideas.

Advanced communication skills take the basic skills of communication and frame them within a general understanding of how the communication process works. When you understand all of the elements involved when people communicate, they can learn to influence not only your own communication, but the communication of others. This is why advanced communication skills are, in essence, leadership skills. They allow you access to ways to guide and direct communication between yourself and another or a group so that you can achieve your goals and outcomes.

1.3 Which Advanced Communication Skills?

We will be looking at a variety of advanced communication skills in this ebook, though we will begin with a review of some communication basics in the next chapter. The advanced communication skills that we will examine are:

- The communications process including types of input, filters we have in our minds as we receive the input, how we 'map' the information in our minds once it's received, and why we should care.

- Internal representation, or the different ways that we each can perceive our world and the main representational systems we use to do so including visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic systems, as well as physical indications of which system a person is using.

- Tips for building rapport that include a six-step process for building strong rapport between you and others and learning to think 'in the shoes' of another person.

- Tools you can use for advanced communication such as reframing and a variety of linguistic choices you can make that will help further your communication with another.

2. Review of Communication Basics

2.1 Introduction

Imagine you are on one side of a wall and the person you want to communicate with is on the other side of the wall. But there's more than the wall in the way. The wall is surrounded by a moat that is filled with crocodiles and edged by quicksand. These barriers could be things like different cultures, different expectations, different experiences, different perspectives, or different communication styles, to name just a few.

> Communication skills are the tools that we use to remove the barriers to effective communication.

You might experience only one of these barriers at a time, or you might find yourself facing them all. Getting your message to the other person requires that you recognize these barriers exist between you, and that you then apply the proper tools, or communication skills, to remove those barriers preventing your message from getting through.

Of course, communication is a two-way street. The person on the other side of those barriers will also try to send messages back to you. Your ability to understand them clearly could be left to a dependence on their ability to use communication skills. But that's leaving the success of the communication to chance. Instead, you can also use your own communication skills to ensure that you receive messages clearly as well.

Finally, there isn't only one point in your communication with another person at which you have to watch out for barriers. To be successful at communicating, it's important to recognize that these barriers to communication can occur at multiple points in the communication process.

2.2 The Communication Process

The communication process involves multiple parts and stages. These are:

- Source
- Message
- Encoding
- Channel
- Decoding

- Receiver
- Feedback
- Context

At each of these stages, there is the potential for barriers to be formed or problems to arise. The steps in the process are represented in Figure 1 and explained further in the following information.

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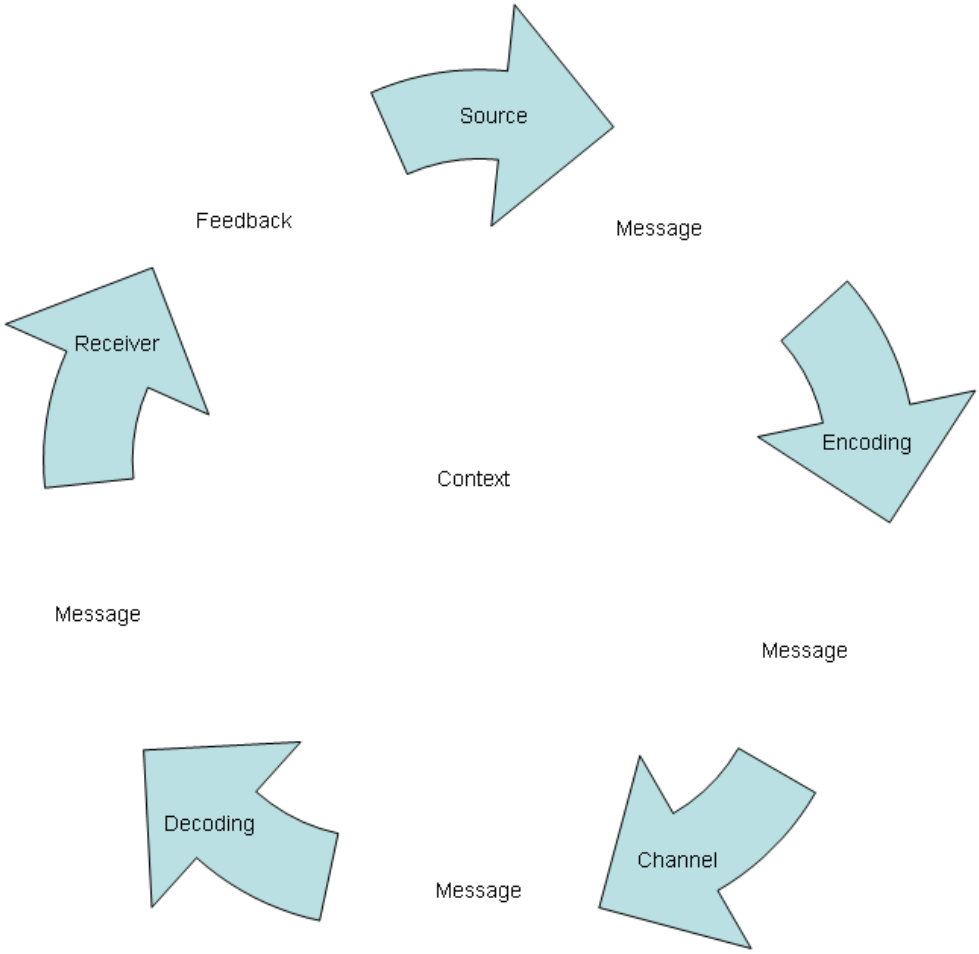

Figure 1: The Communication Process

2.2.1 Source

The source of the communication is the sender, or for our purposes, you. In order to be a good source, you need to be clear about the message that you are sending. Do you know exactly what it is that you want to communicate? You'll also want to be sure you know why it is that you are communicating. What result is it that you expect? If you cannot answer these questions, you will be starting the communication process with a high chance of failure.

> The source of the message is the sender. The sender must know why the communication is necessary and what result is needed.

2.2.2 Message

The message is simply the information that you want to communicate. Without a message, there is no cause for communicating. If you cannot summarize the information that you need to share, you aren't ready to begin the process of communication.

> The message is the information that you need to communicate. It is the reason communication is needed.

2.2.3 Encoding

Encoding is the process of taking your message and transferring it into a format that can be shared with another party. It's sort of like how messages are sent via a fax. The information on the paper has to be encoded, or prepared, before it can be sent to the other party. It has to be sent in a format that the other party has the ability to decode or the message will not be delivered.

In order to encode a message properly, you have to think about what the other person will need in order to understand, or decode, the message. Are you sharing all the information that is necessary to get the full picture? Have you made assumptions that may not be correct? Are you using the best form of sending it in order to ensure the best chance of the message being properly received? Are there cultural, environmental, or language differences between you and the other party that could cause miscommunication?

> Encoding is the process of taking your message and transferring it into the proper format for sharing it with your audience. It requires knowing your audience and ensuring that your message provides all of the information that they need.

Of course, to encode a message properly, you have to know who your audience is. You need to have an understanding of what they know and what they need to know in order to send a complete message. You need to use language they will understand and a context that is familiar. One simple example of how you can do this is being sure to spell out acronyms. We sometimes forget that not everyone is familiar with the acronyms that we may use on a regular basis.

2.2.4 Channel

The channel is the method or methods that you use to convey your message. The type of message you have will help to determine the channel that you should use. Channels include face-to-face conversations, telephone calls or videoconferences, and written communication like emails and memos.

> The Channel is the method of communication that you choose such as face-to-face, by telephone, or via email.

Each channel has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, you will find it difficult to give complex, technical information or instructions by using just the telephone. Or you may get bad results if you try to give criticism via email.

2.2.5 Decoding

Decoding happens when you receive the message that has been sent. The communication skills required to decode a message successfully include the ability to read and comprehend, listen actively, or ask clarifying questions when needed.

If the person you are attempting to communicate with seems to be lacking the skills to decode your message, you will need to either resend it in a different way or assist them in understanding it by supplying clarifying information.

> Decoding is the process of receiving the message accurately and requires that your audience has the means to understand the information you are sharing.

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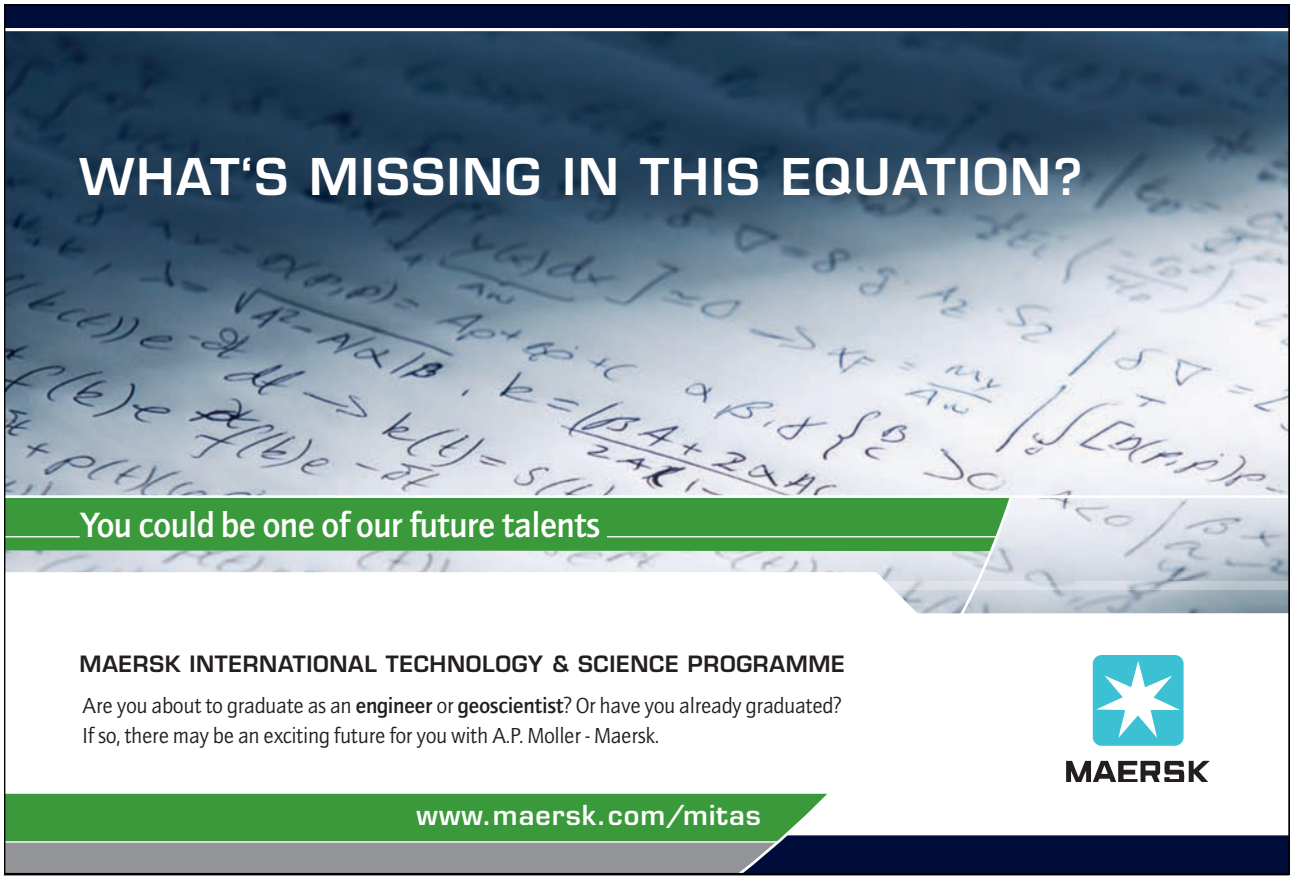

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2.2.6 Receiver

Since you have thought out your message, you've certainly also thought about what you want the desired result to be on the part of your listener. But it's important to realize that each person that receives your message will be listening to it through their own individual expectations, opinions, and perspectives. Their individual experiences will influence how your message is received.

> You have expectations for a response from the receiver when you send a message. You can increase the chances of getting this result by addressing your audience's concerns or addressing specific benefits as part of your communication.

While you can't always address each person's individual concerns in a message, part of planning for your communication is to think ahead of time about what some of their thoughts or experiences might be. For example, if you are releasing a new product and want to convince customers to try it, you would want to be certain to address the specific benefits to the customer, or what improvements have been made since the last version was released.

2.2.7 Feedback

No matter what channel you have used to convey your message, you can use feedback to help determine how successful your communication was. If you are face-to-face with your audience, you can read body language and ask questions to ensure understanding. If you have communicated via writing, you can gauge the success of your communication by the response that you get or by seeing if the result you wanted is delivered.

> Feedback lets you gauge how successful you were at communicating. It also offers a chance to adjust your communication process for the future.

In any case, feedback is invaluable for helping you to improve your communication skills. You can learn what worked well and what didn't so that you can be even more efficient the next time you communicate with that person or the next time you need to communicate a similar message.

2.2.8 Context

The context is the situation in which you are communicating. It involves the environment that you are in and that in which your audience is in, the culture of your organization(s), and elements such as the relationship between you and your audience. You communication process will not look the same when you are communicating with your boss as it will when you are communicating with a friend. The context helps determine the tone and style of your communication.

> Context involves things such as your relationship with your audience, the culture of your organization and your general environment.

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2.3 Elements of Communication

What does it take to communicate with another person? How are we communicating even when we aren't using words? When you begin studying communication, you'll find that we communicate with much more than our words. In face-to-face communication, our words are only part of the message. The balance of the message, and in fact, the largest part of the message that we are sending to others is made up of non-verbal information. It is composed of our body language and our tone of voice. Figure 2 below demonstrates this fact.

Figure 2: Face to Face Communication

2.3.1 Non-Verbal Communication (Tone of Voice & Body Language)

Albert Mehrabian's work on verbal and non-verbal communication in the 1960's and early 1970's is still considered a valid model today. He posed that the non-verbal aspects of communication such as tone of voice and non-verbal gestures communicate a great deal more than the words that are spoken. He also found that people are more likely to believe your non-verbal communication than your verbal communication if the two are contradictory. In other words, you are most believable and most effectively communicating when all three elements of face-to-face communication are aligned with each other.

> The same sentence can have multiple meaning depending on which word is emphasized. The emphasis on a particular word implies additional information than what the words say.

According to Mehrabian, the tone of voice we use is responsible for about 35-40 percent of the message we are sending. Tone involves the volume you use, the level and type of emotion that you communicate and the emphasis that you place on the words that you choose. To see how this works, try saying the sentences in Figure 3 with the emphasis each time on the word in bold.

I didn't say he borrowed my book.

I **didn't** say he borrowed my book.

I didn't **say** he borrowed my book.

I didn't say **he** borrowed my book.

I didn't say he **borrowed** my book.

I didn't say he borrowed **my** book.

I didn't say he borrowed my **book**.

Figure 3: Impact of Tone of Voice

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Notice that the meaning of the sentence changes each time, even though the words are the same. The emphasis you place on the word draws the listener's attention, indicating that the word is important somehow. In this case, the emphasis indicates that the word is an error. So in the first example, **I** didn't say he borrowed my book, the phrase includes the message that someone else said it. The implied information continues to change in each sentence, despite the words remaining the same each time.

Another aspect of non-verbal communication is body language. The way we hold our body, move our arms, our eyes, how close we stand to someone – all of this is a form of communicating subconsciously with others.

Examples of body language include:

- Facial expressions
- The way they are standing or sitting
- Any swaying or other movement
- Gestures with their arms or hands
- Eye contact (or lack thereof)
- Breathing rate
- Swallowing or coughing
- Blushing
- Fidgeting

Basically, body language includes anything they are doing with their body besides speaking. We recognize this communication instinctively, without having to be told what it means. Read the following examples and you'll have a good idea of what the person's body language is telling you.

- Mike is sitting with his arms crossed over his chest. His head is tilted down and away from you. His finger is tapping his arm in a fast, erratic manner.
- Jane is sitting back in her chair with her arms crossed behind her head. She is smiling at you and nodding her head from time to time as you speak.
- Dave is standing close to you at an angle. He is speaking just above a whisper and in a strained voice. He makes quick, sharp movements with his hands.

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- Marci is presenting to the marketing team. She is swaying back and forth, her hands keep changing positions, and she seems to keep absent-mindedly touching her hair.

- Regina is sitting at the conference table in a meeting. Her legs are crossed and the leg that is on the floor is bouncing up and down at a rapid pace. She is sitting forward in her chair with her pen tapping on the table.

> We instinctively recognize what body language is telling us.

We can picture these people and their behaviors from the short description here and without hearing a word from them, we have a pretty good idea of how they are feeling about the situation or about what we are saying to them.

2.3.2 Verbal Communication

The third communication element is verbal communication. Believe it or not, it is actually the least impactful element in face-to-face communication. The old adage is true – it's not what you say, it's how you say it that counts.

Of course, this is a bit simplified. We do want to use verbal communications, the words we choose, to our best advantage. You would definitely make a different impression if you curse during your presentation than if you don't. Choosing our words carefully is a way to enhance our message, but we should remember that it is not the most important part of the message. We should not neglect to pay attention to the non-verbal elements.

But what about when we are limited to using only verbal communication? Given that we know that face-to-face communication delivers the most complete message, we know that verbal communication alone can be challenging in creating effective communication.

> We know that verbal communication alone can be challenging in creating effective communication.

You might think that talking on the telephone or sending off a quick email is an excellent time saver. There are times when this is true. For example, when confirming specific facts or asking simple questions. But for many communication needs, verbal communication only will not suffice.

2.4 Taking Your Communication Skills to the Next Level

This chapter has given you a brief review of the communications process and the elements of communication. The remainder of the ebook will focus on ways to enhance your existing skills in these areas so that you will not just be able to communicate with another person, but you will be fully aware of the mechanics of what is happening during that communication process. You will then be able to make choices in how you communicate in order to help influence the direction that the communication takes, improve the depth and quality of communication, and improve your persuasion skills.

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3. Examining the Communications Process

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we examined the stages of communication. In this chapter, we'll look further at what the actual mechanisms of communication include and how you can use that information to improve your ability to communicate. We'll look at the communication process again from the standpoint of how your message is formed in your brain, how it is received in the other person's brain, and what happens in between these stages. We'll look at the ways that our own experiences have impacted our ability to communicate and we'll look for ways to identify the filters that other people have as well. The process we'll be examining is shown in Figure 4 below:

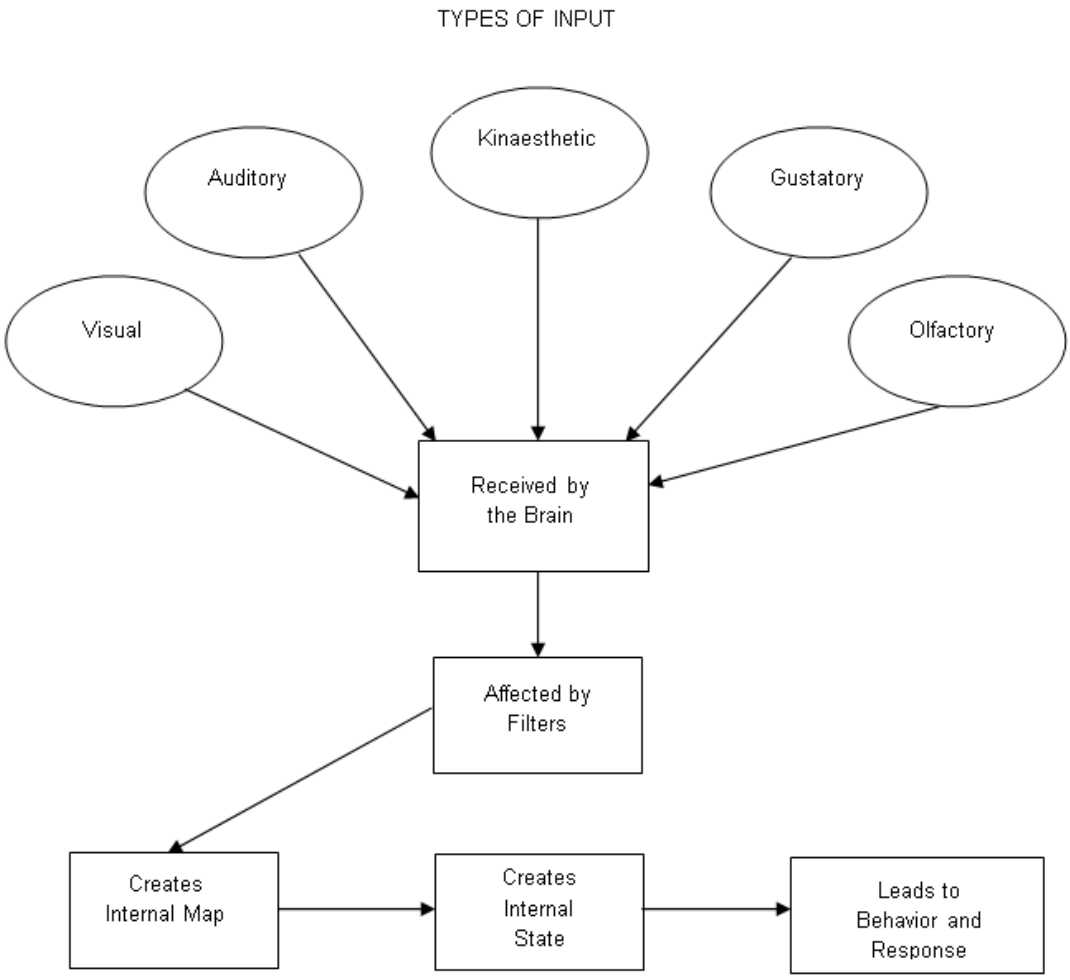

Figure 4: How Information Moves through the Brain

Figure 4 shows us that communication starts with input – what I say to you, or the email I send to you, or you see the angry look on my face. You interpret that input through filters that are made up of your experiences, history, prejudices, and more. That interpretation creates what we call an 'internal map' of meaning. It's made up of the pictures you see in your mind. The map is how your brain processes and makes sense of the filtered input. If it recognizes the input, as in, if you've seen me make that face before, you are able to easily map out what is happening. You would probably start picturing me yelling at you, or sensing how you are about to feel. That map generates a state of being within your mind. You might suddenly be in a state of mind such as anger, fear, resistance, or any other emotion and associated thoughts. That state of being will then lead to your behavior and your response to me. Will you scowl back at me? Ask what's wrong? Run away? Let's look at each element of this process in more detail before examining why they matter for advanced communication skills.

3.2 Types of Input

The brain is constantly bombarded by input. Some of it we process consciously, such as when we read a book or listen to another person. And some of it we process unconsciously, without thinking about it in order to do so. Still other information our brain won't process simply because it is not important or it would result in information overload. Imagine sitting in a crowd of 1,000 people and trying to hear everything they are saying. Notice that it's impossible to understand and process everything that you're seeing and hearing. Now try listening just to one person standing near you. As long as you can hear their voice, you can understand and process the information.

> Some input we process consciously, some we process subconsciously, and some we ignore.

The brain receives this information in the form of input through five main channels that are represented by the five senses:

- Visual – what we see
- Auditory – what we hear
- Kinaesthetic – what we feel, touch, sense, or experience
- Gustatory – what we taste
- Olfactory – what we smell

In business communications, the chances are good that you will not be using the latter two sensea. They might be used if you produce food or beverages, or your olfactory sense could be used if you make perfume or to alert you to danger such as a fire. But in general, you will be communicating in the workplace with the first three types of input: Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic. These three are often referred to as VAK for simplicity's sake.

The three input types of Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic are often referred to as VAK.

3.3 Filters

Our mental filters are just what they sound like – filters our brain uses to process input. As our brain receives information, the intended meaning of that information may be changed by our filters so that the result is not the same as the original intention. The way we will interpret the information is dependent on our own personal filters. Everyone has different filters that will affect how the input reaches the brain. But these filters will cause your brain to do one of three things:

- Delete – this information will not be processed because it is filtered out as unimportant or not acceptable.
- Distort – most filters will distort information so that the meaning the receiver applies to the input is not the same meaning that input would have for a different receiver. The meaning is shaded, changed, or added to by our filters.

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- Generalize – in this case, our filters identify input as being similar to something we've experienced before. The brain then applies the same meaning to this input as it did the last time. The danger with this type of filter is that the meaning of the input may actually be very different.

Everyone has different filters that will affect how the input reaches the brain.

Our filters come from a number of different sources that comprise the total sum of our experiences. As we learn about and make decisions about the world, we come to expect there to be certain patterns that will occur and that causes will lead to effects. Some things that act as filters as we process information include our:

- Values
- Beliefs
- Past Experiences
- Prejudices
- Feelings
- Environment

3.3.1 Values

The things that we value are the things that are important to us in life. We will interpret input in light of our values and make judgments about the input based on our values. For example, if we value education, we may see input as opportunities to learn additional information and improve our education. If we value our relationships with family, we will be more likely to receive input from them and to interpret that input in a way that fosters our relationships with our family. In the business environment, we are likely to value our image as others see us, our reputation, the approval of our boss, the input of our colleagues, our work ethic, and our ability to make a difference in the workplace.

3.3.2 Beliefs

Beliefs are slightly different than values, though there can be some overlap. Our beliefs are the guidelines we use to understand how the world works. For example, we might believe that hard work will be rewarded, that there is a higher power, or that good things will come to those who wait. When we experience input, we will look at it through our beliefs and attempt to make that input fit into our beliefs – or recognize it as not fitting in with our beliefs. In this case, our reaction to the input is likely to be negative or at least skeptical.

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3.3.3 Past Experiences

Imagine that you are in a meeting where you will be discussing changes in your personnel policies at work. What would you bring with you to the meeting? You might have examples of other company's personnel policies. You might have examples from your own time in the company that demonstrate why you feel that certain changes might need to be made. Or you might come to the table empty-handed, with just a pad of paper and a pen in order to take notes.

What influences you to do any of these things? Your past experience. You would bring outside information because you have learned in the past that comparing situations can be helpful in decision making. Or you might bring nothing with you because the last time this same group of people met, they did nothing productive. In either case, your past experiences are influencing your current communication. We hear a tone of voice and know that the last time we experienced that tone of voice, we heard bad news. Or we see someone running down the hall and we automatically expect something urgent. Whatever we experience, our brain is examining our past experiences in order to be prepared to respond to what comes next.

3.3.4 Prejudices

We all have prejudices. They occur when we take our past experiences with a person and assume that the same type of experience will happen with all people who are similar to the first. Prejudices are partly due to culture and partly due to personal preference or experience. Not all prejudices involve a negative characteristic either; for example, you could consider all of one group to be smart. When you encounter input that triggers one of these prejudices, you will automatically be making judgments or assumptions that may color your communication as well.

The problem with prejudices is when they start to influence how or to whom we communicate. To get an idea of how this could be happening in your workplace, consider how you might complete the phrases below. If you can't think of a way to complete it from your own experience, complete each phrase with a stereotype that you might have heard in the past:

- Women in the workplace are…..
- Young people in the workplace are….
- Seniors in the workplace are….
- Working mothers in the workplace are….
- Supervisors at work are….
- The lowest job level workers are….
- Blacks, whites, or (fill in a race) in the workplace are….

- Homosexuals in the workplace are…..
- Christians, Muslims, or (fill in a religion) in the workplace are….
- Disabled people in the workplace are….

When we categorize people like this, we eliminate their individuality. If you are communicating to a person through a perceived prejudice or stereotype, at the very least you are greatly limiting the chances of your communication being successful or producing the desired result. At the most, you are alienating or insulting someone with whom you are trying to build a working relationship.

Your goal should be to see each person as an individual that is separate from any preconceived notions you might have about them. It takes practice, but wouldn't you like to be seen and communicated with as an individual and not as a sum of different labels that can be placed on you?

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3.3.5 Feelings

For this area of influence, there are actually two ways in which your feelings can influence your communication with another person. The first simply refers to the way that you feel on a given day; if you feel well, you'll communicate in one way and if you feel ill you'll communicate in another. Since your well being fluctuates, it makes sense that the way you communicate will change somewhat with how well you are feeling. If you find yourself experiencing difficulty in communicating due to an illness or other physical stressor, recognizing and acknowledging it, when appropriate, can be very helpful when others might interpret the change in your communication as having something to do with them.

The second aspect related to feelings refers to how you feel about a specific person. When you genuinely like someone, the way you communicate is going to show it. Unfortunately, the same can be said for when you don't like someone. However, as you continue learning about effective communication skills in the following chapters, you will find some tools to help you be as effective as possible in communicating, even when it's with someone that you dislike.

3.3.6 Environment

The last area of influence on your communication is your environment. All of us communicate differently in different environments. This is simple enough to observe in everyday life. Do you speak to your colleagues the same way that you do to your friends? Do you talk to strangers with more or less formality than people you know well? Do you talk to your subordinates the same way when your own boss is there as you do when she is not there? As you go through your workday, notice how where you are, what is going on and who else is present may be impacting the way that you communicate.

Recognizing how the environment might be affecting others you communicate with is a skill that can come in handy for you, particularly when you perceive that the environment is having a negative impact on your ability to communicate effectively with someone. This skill will help you to perceive why someone might be communicating in the way that they are. It will also give you a factor that you can alter in order to make the person more comfortable or to establish a level of formality that you feel is important in a particular situation.

3.4 The Internal Map, Internal State, and Behavior or Response

Now that the input has been filtered, it will be processed by the brain in order to gain meaning from it. This process is called creating an internal 'map.' It's as if your brain dissects and organizes the information into a pattern or a picture that it can make sense of. If it sees a pattern that it recognizes, it will automatically apply meaning to the input based on that existing pattern. If it doesn't recognize the input or the pattern, it will create a new map and apply the most likely meaning based on past experience of similar input. Of course, this all happens in a fraction of a second.

> The pictures we generate to give meaning to the input are referred to as the internal 'map'. That interpretation of meaning leads to a change in our internal state, which then generates our behavior and response.

Whatever meaning the brain maps out for the input, it creates an internal state of being. You can imagine this very easily if you think about the last time you heard some bad news. You processed the input in a way that you understood that the meaning was negative, which led to an internal state of being such that you might have started to feel angry or sad or displeased. You might have even physically felt a response to the meaning, such as a tightening of the chest or a quickening of the pulse.

Finally, this leads to your behavior or response to the input. In our example of hearing bad news, you would respond with sympathy, empathy, fear, or anger. You might cry or yell. Your brain searches for the words to describe what you want to say in return. Whatever that internal state is that is created will determine how you behave and respond to the input you receive. In other words, the input you received, filtered, and interpreted will determine what and how you give back in response.

3.5 Why This Matters

Sure, this is interesting information, but why should we care when it comes to improving our communication skills? We care because now that we know the framework of how information is received, filtered, and processed, we can use our knowledge to our advantage to help make sure that our meaning is delivered clearly and that we are able to help the other person declare their own messages clearly. We can orchestrate the input that we give out in a way that helps the other person to interpret it. In the remaining chapters of this ebook, we'll examine ways to apply this new knowledge through practical communication techniques that you can use.

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4. Internal Representation

4.1 Introduction

Let's start with an experiment. Read the word below:

Elephant

What happened when you read the word? What picture was generated in your mind? Did you see the large, gray animal in your head? Maybe just a part of the animal, like a trunk, tusks, ears, or feet?

> VAK is the order in which our brain processes communication. We visualize something before we can put words to it or describe how it feels.

Chances are that you pictured some form of the animal in a visual image – you did not see the word 'elephant' spelled out in big black letters in your mind's eye. This shows us that VAK is also the order in which our brain processes communication. Once you can picture the elephant (visual), you can imagine its sound (auditory). Try to imagine the trumpeting of an elephant without picturing the animal and you'll find it's not possible. Now notice that you can describe the elephant. You can tell someone what it looks like, describe it in detail, and, if you have every touched an elephant or have any feelings about your imaginary elephant, you can share those as well (kinaesthetic).

4.2 Internal Representation of Our World

We all *represent* our experience of the world in our own unique way. Even if we observe the same events, receiving the same sensory inputs (sights, sounds, touch, tastes and smells), we *filter* them according to our existing beliefs. Consequently, the model of this that we make in our minds will be different for each of us. And all of our models will be different from reality, or:

The map is not the territory.

When we think about an experience, we recreate the sights, sounds and feelings that we originally perceived. We also have the ability to create inward sensations that we have never experienced "for real". We can *construct* sights, sounds and feelings, which, in turn, assist us to makes our internal world visible, audible and tangible to others. It allows us to share a world of experience and to communicate abstract ideas, to understand and to be understood.

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Language gives us tremendous freedom. It does not necessarily limit our thoughts, but limits the expression of them to others and this can lead to misunderstandings in two ways:

1. The words we use may be inadequate to describe our thoughts and feelings

2. Other people may not give the same meaning to the words that we give because they have different experiences

Language communicates events and experience in ways that come from the construction of the language itself, rather than from the experience that gives rise to it - remember the pre-supposition– ***the map (words) is not the territory (sensory experience)***. In this sense, language is not real in the same way that experience is real.

Confusing words with the experiences they represent leads to four misunderstandings:

- We translate our experience into language and mistake the language for the experience when it is only an incomplete reflection. We may think our experience is constructed in the same way as the language we use to talk about it and act inside those limits – we allow the words to limit us. The words bar us from wider choice, understanding and action.

- We mistakenly believe others share our assumption and so we leave out vital parts of our message. This often confuses others when we do not mean to.

- We misunderstand others because we fill in gaps in their words from our ***model of the world,*** rather than finding out their model of the world. We wrongly think that because we share the same language, we share the same experience.

- We tend to ***install*** our meaning or model of the world upon others. How often do you hear phrases like "That must have been……..for you" or "I expect…. happened to you"? Often the speaker is mistakenly installing their own view or reaction upon the listener.

4.3 Language as a Representational System

Just as we see, hear, taste, touch and smell the outside world, so we recreate those same sensations in our mind, ***re-presenting*** the world to ourselves using our senses inwardly. We may either remember past experiences or imagine possible (or impossible) future experience. We can picture ourselves running for a bus (remembered visual image) or running across the surface of Mars wearing a Father Christmas outfit (constructed visual image). The first will have happened, the second will not – and you can represent both.

There is a **Representational System** for each of our senses; this is the way we experience our world. What we actually perceive are representations of what each sensory organ transmits to us. There are two important principles about these representational systems:

- During the process of building our models of the world, language is attached to our experiences. The collection of word symbols and the rules that govern their use make up a unique and distinct, sixth representational system. This is called our **Auditory Digital (AD)** system or how we talk to ourselves. It is not an analog system like the other representational systems and not related to any specific sensory organ.

- We all continually make use of all of the representational systems, switching from one to another for different reasons throughout our day. Most people tend to favor one over another and process most communication in this manner. This is called our **Primary Representational System**, and can be recognized by physiology and **predicates** (preferred words of that system).

We know that the three main channels of input in most person-to-person communications, at least at work, are visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. But now we are going to look at the fact that each of us has a preferred way of receiving input. It is the way that we are most comfortable and capable with receiving information through. This is a general preference; we can and do change our preference from time to time in response to the environment or the needs of the situation at hand. But there is usually a dominate preference for one channel over the others.

> Each of us has a preferred 'channel' through which we best receive input – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic. It is a general preference, however, and may change in response to the environment or the particular situation at hand.

One area in which it is easy to understand this preference is in learning. We each have a preferred learning style. For example:

- If you prefer to learn by demonstration, you are probably a visual learner

- If you prefer to learn by listening to directions, listening to lectures, or reading, you are probably an auditory learner

- If you prefer to learn by doing something hands-on or by trying it yourself, you are probably a kinaesthetic learner

This is good to know because then you can maximize your potential for learning if you have others give you input in the way that works best for you. And, if you can learn how others prefer to receive input, you can deliver it to them in that mode as well. We call this 'being on the same wavelength' with someone else. Doing so takes basic communication to the next level because it makes you much more effective in getting your message across to the other party. Being able to communicate so well helps to build additional rapport and improve relationships.

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So how can you determine a person's preferred sensory channel for receiving input? If you are paying attention, the person will give you clues through their language and through their behavior. We'll look at both verbal and nonverbal clues.

4.4 Verbal Clues

As we said, the preferred channel for receiving input is not static – it can change from time to time and depending on what kind of input is being received. For example, we don't 'see' music first – we hear it. If we are talking on the phone, we are using our auditory channel even if we have a general preference for the visual channel. So how can we determine which 'channel' the person is using during our communication with them? One way is to listen to the verbal clues they are giving us. The words that someone is using give you an indication as to which type of 'mode' they are in – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic. Or, they may use language that doesn't clearly indicate which mode they are in, which we refer to as 'unspecified.'

> The words that someone uses can give you an indication as to which 'mode' they are thinking in – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic.

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Take a look at Figure 5 to get an idea of some of the common verbal language that people will use when they are in each form of internal representational thinking. If you respond using similar language, it is a signal to the other person that you are thinking similarly – that you are on the same 'wavelength' as they are.

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic	Unspecified
See	Hear	Fell	Sense
Look	Listen	Touch	Experience
View	Sounds	Grasp	Understand
Appear	Make music	Get hold of	Think
Show	Harmonize	Slip through	Learn
Dawn	Tune in/out	Catch on	Process
Reveal	Be all ears	Tap into	Decide
Envision	Rings a bell	Make contact	Motivate
Illuminate	Silence	Throw out	Consider
Imagine	Be heard	Turn around	Change
Clear	Resonate	Hard	Perceive
Foggy	Deaf	Unfeeling	Insensitive
Focused	Loud	Concrete	Distinct
Hazy	Melody	Get a handle on	Know
Picture	Unhearing	Solid	

Figure 5: Verbal Indications of Thinking 'Modes'

You can see that the verbs that indicate action correspond to the way in which the person is perceiving that action.

Some additional phrases that a person might use in each mode of thinking are shown in Figure 6 below:

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic
An eyeful	Afterthought	All washed up
Appears to me	Blabbermouth	Boils down to
Beyond a shadow of a doubt	Call on	Chip off the old block
Birds eye view	Clear as a bell	Come to grips with
Catch a glimpse of	Clearly expressed	Control yourself
Clear cut	Describe in detail	Cool/calm/collected
Dim view	Earful	Firm foundations
Flashed on	Enquire into	Get a handle on
Get a perspective on	Give me your ear	Get a load of this
Get a scope on	Give you a call	Get in touch with
Hazy idea	Given amount of	Get the drift of
In light of	Grant an audience	Get your back up
In person	Heard voices	Hand in hand
In view of	Hidden message	Hand in there
Looks like	Hold your tongue	Heated argument
Make a scene	Ideal talk	Hold it
Mental image	Key note speaker	Hold on
Mental picture	Loud and clear	Hot head
Minds eye	Manner of speaking	Keep your shirt on
Naked eye	Pay attention to	Lay cards on the table
Paint a picture	Power of speech	Pain in the neck
See to it	State your purpose	Pull some strings
Short sighted	To tell the truth	Sharp as a tack
Showing off	Tongue-tied	Slipped my mind
Sight for sore eyes	Tuned in/tuned out	Smooth operator
Staring off into space	Unheard of	So-so
Take a peak	Utterly	Start from scratch
Tunnel vision	Voiced an opinion	Stiff upper lip
Under your nose	Well informed	Stuffed shirt
Up front	Within hearing	Too much hassle
Well defined	Word for word	Topsy turvey

Figure 6: Common Phrases Used in Each Mode of Thinking

Now that you have a general understanding of how the words a person uses may indicate the mode in which they are currently thinking, let's take a look at each mode in further detail.

4.5 Visual Representation System

The visual representation system involves the process used to translate communication into pictures in the mind. You can determine whether a person tends to prefer this form of communication by identifying certain behavioural cues. These people:

- Stand or sit with their heads and/or bodies erect, with their eyes up.
- Are breathing from the top of their lungs and their upper shoulders and breathe fairly rapidly.
- Often sit forward in their chair and tend to be organized, neat, well groomed and orderly. Appearance is important to them.
- Memorize by seeing pictures, and are less distracted by noise.
- Often have trouble remembering verbal instructions because their minds tend to wander.
- Are fast talkers.
- Feel that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

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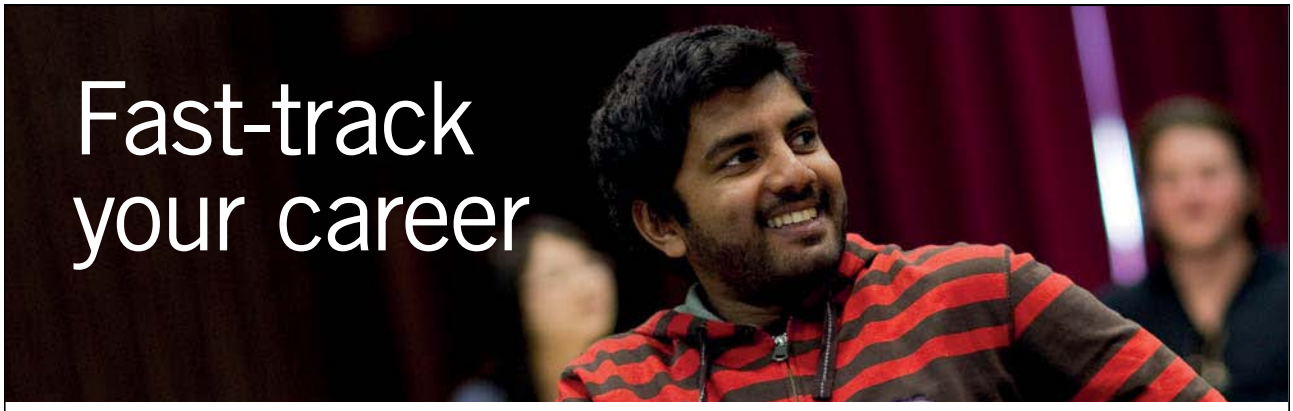

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- Use picture descriptions during conversation.
- Are interested in how things look.
- Must see things to understand them.
- Like visually-based feedback.
- Use gestures that may be high & quick.

4.6 Auditory Representational System

Those with a preference for an auditory representational system tend to prefer to translate communication into sound. Indications that you have someone who prefers this system are that they:

- Will move their eyes sideways.
- Breathe from the middle of their chest.
- Typically talk to themselves and some even move their lips when they talk to themselves.
- Are easily distracted by noise.
- Can repeat things back to you easily.
- Learn by listening.
- Usually like music and talking on the phone.
- Memorize by steps, procedures, and sequences.
- Like to be TOLD how they're doing.
- Respond to a certain tone of voice or set of words.
- Will be interested in what you have to say about a topic.
- Are medium to fast talkers.
- Translate conversation to sounds associated with the topic.
- Are excellent at repeating back instructions.

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4.7 Kinaesthetic Representational System

Those that prefer a kinaesthetic representational system check the input they receive in communication against what they are feeling. Some indications that you are communicating with someone who prefers this system are:

- They breathe from the bottom of their lungs, so you'll see their stomach go in and out when they breathe.
- They often move and talk very slowly.
- They respond to physical rewards and touching.
- They also stand closer to people than a visual person does.
- They memorize by doing or walking through something.
- They will be interested in your idea if it "feels right."
- They check out their feelings prior to expressing their thoughts.
- They are very physical people and like to touch during conversation.
- They like to walk through something before doing it.
- They use gestures that are low and smooth.

4.8 Auditory Digital Representational System

Finally, we can't forget about the representational system that we all use at some time – checking communication internally by talking to ourselves. People who are functioning in this system will exhibit some indications as well, such as:

- Spending a fair amount of time talking to themselves.
- Wanting to know if your idea "makes sense."
- Speaking in a clipped, crisp monotone.
- Breathing patterns like a person who prefers auditory, higher up in the chest.

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- Dissociated from feelings.
- The auditory digital person can exhibit characteristics of the other major representational systems.

4.9 Eye Movements as an Indication

In the late seventies and early eighties researchers discovered that people move their eyes in a certain way when they think. Students were asked a series of questions and the researchers noticed that their eye movements, when thinking, followed a structured pattern. They realized that by looking at someone's eyes, you could tell how they think, at least how they are thinking at the moment. Figure 7 below demonstrates that you can tell the way they are constructing their thoughts by watching their eyes. Imagine you are facing the person in the figure to understand the directions of the eye movement.

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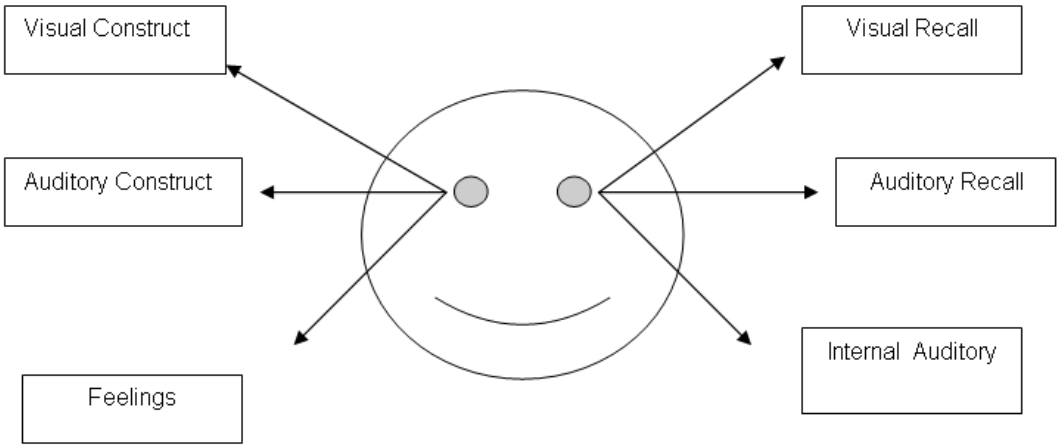

Figure 7: Eye Movements as Indicators

The basic guideline is that when:

- **People are looking up** – They are visualising
- **People look horizontally to the left and right** – They are remembering or constructing sounds
- **People look down and to their left** – They are talking to themselves
- **People look down and to the right** – They are accessing their feelings.

Let's examine the phrases presented in the diagram as well as how you might respond to someone when you have determined what their eye movements are telling you.

4.9.1 Visual Recall

This is when you are seeing images from the past. You are recalling them from memory because they are things that you have seen before. You are using this type of thinking when you answer questions like:

"What did your curtains look like in your room when you were a teenager?"

"What did your first car look like?"

4.9.2 Visual Construct

You are using visual construct when you are visualizing something you have never seen before or you are making something up in your head

To exercise this method of thinking, ask yourself questions like:

"What would your car look like if it was painted a different color?"

"What would your house look like if it were painted red?"

"What would you look like if you lost 20 kg in weight?"

"If a map is upside down, which direction is SE"?

4.9.3 Auditory Recall

This is when you are remember sounds or voices that you have heard before or things that you have said to yourself before. When you ask someone "What was the last thing I said?" they normally look in the direction indicated in Figure 7.

You use this mode when you answer questions like:

"Can you remember the sound of your father's voice?"

"Can you remember what you said to yourself when you did that?"

"What was the last thing I said?"

4.9.4 Auditory Construct

This is when you are making sounds up that you have never heard before. You use this when you answer questions like:

"What would the national anthem sound like if it were played on the flute?"

"What would I sound like if I were fluent in Spanish?"

"When you talk to yourself where does the sound come from?"

4.9.5 Kinaesthetic

When you are accessing your feelings you tend to look in this direction. You use this type of thinking when you answer questions like:

"What does it feel like to touch sand paper?"

"What does it feel like to be happy?"

4.9.6 Internal Auditory

This is where your eyes go when you are having internal dialogue and talking to yourself. You can demonstrate this for yourself by answering the following questions:

"What do you say to yourself when things go wrong?"

"Can you hear your favorite piece of music in your mind?"

This is one way that body language can help you to understand how to communicate with another person because the eyes are often the key to knowing what 'wavelength' the other person is on at that moment and through which form of communication they are likely to best understand what you have to say. We'll look at more body language techniques later on.

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4.10 Phrases for Use in Response to Each Representational System

Once you have identified the representational system that the person is using to communicate to you, you can use that information in determining how you want to respond to the other person. Following are some examples of how you might use this information in responding to someone you've identified as using each representational system.

VISUAL

Sample sentences:

> *If I could show you an attractive way in which you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to look at it, wouldn't you?*
>
> *If this looks good to you we will go ahead and focus on getting the paperwork done.*

Other phrases to use:

- It looks to me like…
- Show me what you mean…
- It appears that…
- Picture this…
- Let's focus on…

AUDITORY

Sample sentences:

> *If I could tell you a way in which you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to hear about it, wouldn't you?*
>
> *If this sounds good to you we will go ahead and discuss how to set up an account.*

Other phrases to use:

- I hear what you are saying, and it sounds to me like…
- Tell me more about that…

- Let's make it loud and clear what we mean…
- What you're saying rings true…

KINAESTHETIC

Sample sentences:

If I could help you get hold of a concrete way in which you know you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to get a feel for it, wouldn't you?

If this feels good to you we will go ahead and set up an account by handling the paperwork.

Other phrases to use:

- I think you're getting a handle on it…
- We need to stress the pressure we're under…
- Once we get a grip on these numbers you'll be in good hands…

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5. Building Rapport

5.1 Introduction

Rapport has been defined as "unconscious sameness."When you like someone, perhaps on first meeting, and find them easy to talk to, it is because you find that they are like you in certain ways. These ways can be quite superficial, e.g. posture and voice tone, or very deep, sharing beliefs and values. Rapport is the ultimate tool for producing results with other people and thus it is so vital for effective communication. We'll examine several tools for building rapport in this chapter.

5.2 Six Steps to Building Rapport

Whether you know the person or not, there are six main steps to establishing rapport with anyone. Figure 8 demonstrates the six steps.

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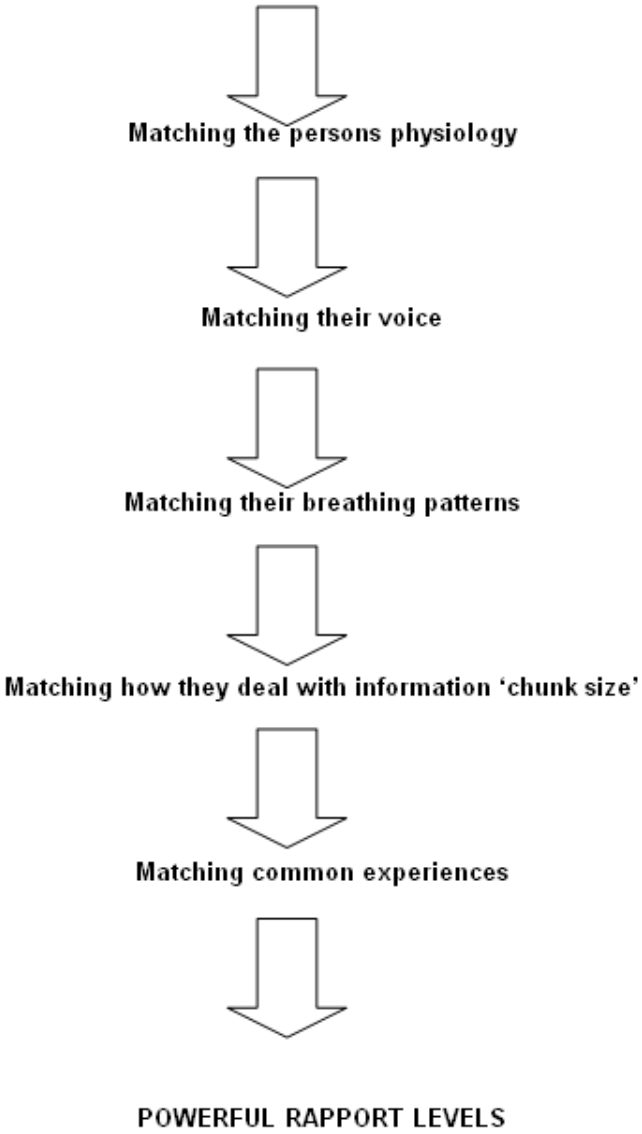

Figure 8: Six Steps to Building Rapport

When you bear in mind that as much as 93% of all communication is down to the tonality of your voice and your body language, building rapport is far more than just talking about common experiences. It's an important point to remember that people like people when they are similar to themselves and when they are not it so much more difficult to have any sort of relationship with that person - never mind an effective one! Let's now look at each of the six steps to building rapport.

5.2.1 Match the Person's Sensory Modality

To match a person's sensory modality means taking all of the information you learned in chapter 4 and putting it into use. You will want to listen for the indicator words and eye movements that were covered and then respond in a similar way.

5.2.2 Mirror the Person's Physiology

Since so much of our communication is non-verbal, we receive the majority of our information from another person through the subconscious messages they are sending with their physiology or body language. This is a great reason to understand body language because you can use it to communicate intentionally that you are on the same wavelength as another person. Next time you are in a conversation that you are enjoying or with whom it is important to you to make a good impression, notice their body language. Now notice yours. Chances are, you have subconsciously mimicked their body language. If they lean forward, you lean forward. If they cross one foot over their knee, you do the same. This is our automatic response to someone that we want to establish a positive connection with – and it's one you can use to enhance your communication with someone.

> Body language is a useful tool that you can learn to use.
>
> You can mimic another's body language when you want to express support for them.
>
> You can use a person's body language to realize that your message is incomplete – there is more to say or there are questions to be answered.

When you are in a situation where you want to convey your support of another person, you can intentionally mirror their body language. If you are standing in the hallway and they lean to one side, mirror their action. If they sit back and relax, do the same. You are sending subconscious signals that you are on their side, even if the topic that you are discussing is one where there may be disagreement. It reaffirms that you are part of the same team, no matter what else might be going on.

You can also use this tool to gauge whether or not others are buying what you are saying. Are they using words that express agreement, but sitting all wound up with crossed arms and legs? Unless they just happen to be cold, chances are that there is some matter still unresolved in their mind. You can use this signal as information to you that you still need to do some explaining or ask some additional questions.

5.2.3 Match the Person's Voice

You can also match the tone of voice and the speed at which a person talks. For example, if they are a fast talker, try to speak faster yourself. If they happen to speak slowly, watch your own pace and slow it down. Also be sure that you don't let their slow speaking aggravate you, a sure way to damage your rapport! If you are communicating with a person who has an accent that is different than yours, also be careful that you don't unconsciously mimic their accent. This can be seen as offensive.

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5.2.4 Match the Person's Breathing

Sure, we each have a different rate and depth of breathing when we are not thinking about it. If you are rather fit and the person you are speaking to is not and you are walking to a meeting together, chances are you won't be able to put this tool into use. But whenever you can, try to match the other person's breathing in pace and depth. Breathe in when they do and exhale when they do. This is another subconscious way of indicating that you are in support or agreement with the other person and can help you build deeper rapport.

> Whenever you can, match the other person's breathing in pace and depth.

5.2.5 Match the Way the Person Deals with Information

This is not the same advice as matching the other person's way of thinking. Instead, this advice refers to matching the 'chunk size' of information that the person is comfortable dealing with. For example, do they want to take information one small detail, or chunk, at a time? Or are they a 'big picture' person and want to just get the broad strokes overview?

> Match the 'chunk size' of information that the other person is most comfortable dealing with.

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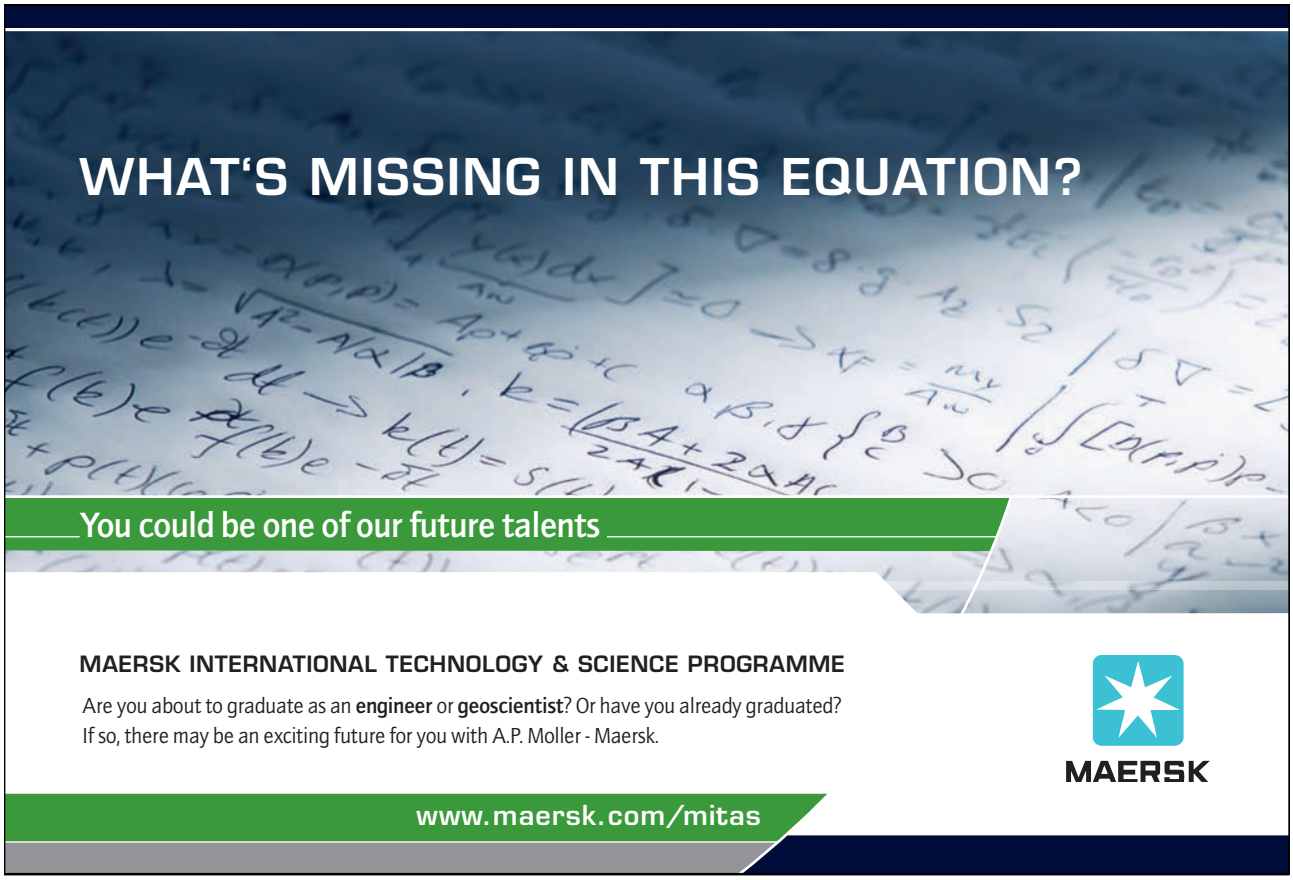

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This is a challenge for many people because if you are a detail-oriented person, you will naturally feel that it is important to convey information to the other person in small, specific chunks. But if that person is a 'big picture' person and you attempt to feed them every tiny detail, they are going to get bored, overwhelmed, or upset. Since you are the one that understands how important using the right 'chunk size' of information is, you can adapt your own preference to that of the other person. Not doing so can quickly turn against you when it comes to rapport.

5.2.6 Match Common Experiences

Matching common experiences is about finding some commonality to talk about. We might attempt to match experiences, interests, backgrounds, or acquaintances. This is often the first thing we attempt to do when we meet someone new – we look for things we have in common. It's a natural, fast way to build rapport. We ask where they are from, what they do, or how they know the other people in the room. But be sure that you don't choose to focus only on this step – if the preceding steps are out of sync, the other person won't feel that any rapport-building is natural and sincere.

> Be sure not to concentrate only on this step without performing the earlier steps.

5.3 Calibration

When you are using these tools, it's important to remember that you need to be subtle. Matching and mirroring should appear natural, not intentional. Typically, the other person will be focusing so much on what they have to say that they will not even notice. But calibration is one way of determining whether you are in rapport with someone. This basically means that you need to develop your ability to notice what is happening to such an extent that you can begin to see people's reactions to communication. If the person seems to be comfortable with what you are doing, more than likely you are building rapport. Look at for their eye movement, the muscles around the eyes, their lip movement, and twitches or changes in breathing.

> Calibration means learning to notice how the other person is reacting to your attempts to build rapport.

5.4 Pereceptual Positions

We've all heard the expression, "Put yourself in my shoes."The idea of taking up someone else's point of view is a very powerful one in learning to communicate at an advanced level. We distinguish three perceptual positions:

- **1st Position** is seeing, hearing and feeling the situation through your own eyes, ears and emotions. You apply your own values and beliefs. You use the word "I" to mean yourself.

- **2nd Position** is seeing things from the point of view of the other person in a situation. You imagine you are that person, with their values, beliefs and outlook - beginning to understand the choices they make. You use the word "I" to mean the other person because, at that moment, you *are* them.

- **3rd Position** is that of a detached observer. When you adopt this position, you will see yourself and the other people in the situation, perhaps imagining yourself floating above the scene or viewing it through a pane of glass. This enables you to see what's happening without being affected by emotions.

Taking up 1st position is also referred to as being *associated* and being in 3rd position as *dissociated*. These positions can be used:

- in "real time" - actually during an interaction with someone

- when inwardly reviewing a past event

- when rehearsing a future situation

It's worth practicing different perceptual positions, particularly where there's disagreement. You don't have to give up your opinion, just try on the other's view of the world. The insight you gain can really help you to decide what to say or do next to make it easier for the other person to agree, or it will show you compromises that work for both of you.

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Here are the steps to use in order to try on the different perceptual positions:

Recall a situation where a communication has not gone how you wanted it to. Perhaps a conversation that turned into an argument.

- **1st Position:** Put yourself back into that situation as if you are actually there again, seeing through your own eyes, hearing through your own ears and feeling through your own skin.
  - What can you see, hear and feel?
  - What are you thinking?
  - What state are you in?

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- **2nd Position:** Put yourself into the other person's position. It may help to move physically to where you imagined them to be in step 1. Become that person:
    - What can you see, hear and feel?
    - What are you thinking?
    - What do you believe about this situation?
    - Which of your values are relevant?
    - What is your state?
    - What do you want to happen?
- **3rd Position:** Step to one side and become an uninvolved observer. You might imagine yourself floating up in the air to be well outside of the situation
    - What is happening? (What do you see and hear?)
    - What are both of the people doing?
    - What is important to them?
    - What positive intentions do they have in common?
- Return to 1st Position and review what you have learned about the other person and about yourself.

Hopefully you can learn something valuable, particularly if this is a person that you will need to be interacting with on a regular basis. You can try this tool in any relationship you have that is valuable, not just those in the work environment.

6. Tools for Advanced Communication

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine a series of methods that will help you to:

- Communicate that you see things from the other person's perspective
- Move the listener to a higher level of thought or past an objection
- Direct a conversation without dominating it

6.2 Reframing

Reframing is the process of making a shift in the nature of a problem. It is the process of changing a negative statement into a positive one by changing the "frame" or reference used to interpret the experience. If all meaning is context dependent, and if you change the context or content, then you will change the meaning. All content is re-framable simply by changing the structure, the process, or the context.

The basis of all reframing is to separate intention from behavior and consequence. Intention is the opposite of consequence. It is how you precede an action or behavior and consequence is what happens at the end of the action. Consequences can be either positive or negative.

In order to reframe something, you have several options. You can:

- Redefine the words
- Change the time frame
- Explore the consequences
- Change the chunk size
- Find a counter-example
- Ask for evidence
- Appeal to the positive intention behind the belief
- Change the context so that the relationship doesn't apply in the same way

Here is an example. As you read this ebook, imagine that you have had the following thought:

Learning Advanced Communications Skills is hard

Redefine the words:

- *You don't have to learn them, you only need to become familiar with them.*
- *Learning them isn't hard, it just takes a little more effort.*

Change the time frame:

- *The quicker you do it, the easier it will seem*
- *You have plenty of time to practice and become more comfortable with them.*

Explore the consequences:

- *Unless you try it, you will never know how easy it can be.*
- *If you don't learn them, you won't be as effective in communicating as you could be.*

Change the chunk size:

- Chunk up: *Is learning hard in general?*
- Chunk down *How hard is to learn one specific skill?*

Find a counter example:

- *Has there ever been a time when you found learning……easy?*
- *Have you ever had an experience where you thought something was hard at first, but you eventually got the hang of it?*

Ask for evidence:

- *How do you know that?*
- *Why do you feel it is hard?*

Appeal to the positive intention behind the belief:

- *I can tell you want to learn these thoroughly.*
- *I know how much you want to improve your communication skills.*

Change the context so that the relationship does not apply in the same way:

- *How hard it is for you to learn depends upon who is teaching*
- *You learned to speak Japanese – now that was hard!*

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6.3 Linguistic Tools for Advanced Communicators

In this final section, we'll look at some more methods for choosing words in a way that helps the other person to feel more rapport between you, that can help you move them past a stumbling block, and that let you guide the conversation without appearing to control it. These tools are a form of 'artfully vague' language, meaning that you need to do this with intention in order for it to be effective. Following are examples of what we mean:

- **Mind reading** – with this tool, you indicate with your word choice that you know what the other person is thinking. If you are accurate, you've strengthened your rapport and it can manage an objection before it is voiced. You can even gain their agreement because using this kind of language can convince the other person that they actually do feel the way you are suggesting. Examples include:
    - *I know you believe this might be difficult, but it will be worth it.*
    - *I understand that you are concerned about the outcome, but your careful preparation will ensure success.*
    - *Many people feel, as you do, that it's important to demonstrate integrity in our work and product.*
- **Lost Performative** – in this case, you are stating a value judgment that omits identifying the person who is doing the judging. This makes it a neutral, easy to agree with statement. It is called the lost performative because there is no indication of the source of the information. You are actually increasing your ability to control the conversation without taking and misinterpreting the other person's point of view. Examples include:
    - *It's a fact that people like people who are like themselves.*
    - *It's good to know that the economy is getting better.*
- **Cause and effect relationships –** this helps you put across a message when you want the other person to see the effect of what you are talking about. For example:
    - *Seeing you come in late makes me feel you don't care*
    - *Coaching will help you learn many skills*
    - *Attending this meeting will create changes*

- **Presuppostion -** a presupposition is something that you haven't stated but that is assumed to be present or true for your statement to be understood. For example:
    - *When we've finished your appraisal, you'll feel confident about the next six months* (we are presupposing that the confidence will come or that we will do something that will leave them feeling confident – all we have to do is finish the appraisal).
    - *As the economy picks up, we will see profits improve* (we are presupposing that the economy will pick up eventually).
- **Universal beliefs** – a statement of something as a universal belief implies that there is no exception to what you are saying. You can use universal beliefs to get the person on your side and to accept or agree to what you are saying. Examples might be:
    - *Everyone wants to be happy at work*
    - *If you remain positive, you'll see better results*
- **Tag questions -** this tool gets the other person to think about what you said and then answer it in their mind. Since we can think about five times faster than we can talk, this can work well in building agreement.
    - *As we take more action, our market share goes up, doesn't it?*
    - *By listening more closely, you've learned much more, haven't you?*
- **Embedded commands** – these are exactly what they sound like – a command in your language without actually commanding someone to do something. These words speak to the subconscious and form part of a larger context, like:
    - *So, looking at your priorities makes you feel better now?* (Embedded command is 'feel better now.')
    - *It's good you've decided to get that report finished by 2pm*. (Embedded command is that you've decided – finish it by 2pm)

Now you should have a complete tool box full of tools that you can use to improve your communication skills. Remember that these skills do take time to learn, but the energy and effort that you put forth will soon be rewarded by improved relationships – both at work and outside of it.

7. Resources

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