**Essentials for Effective Communication**

Being able to communicate effectively is an essential skill. Whether it’s in our business life or our personal relationships, effective communication is the key to our success.

Life coaching for effective communication is a fantastic way to learn and attain this skill.  Through a number of communication models, I’ll show you how to get ahead and stay ahead.

Here are my top ten essential skills for effective communication.  Master these skills now, and they’ll serve you well for a long time to come!

**1. Listening**

One of the most important aspects of effective communication is being a good listener.

People do not like communicating with others who are only interested in telling you what they want to tell you, and don’t listen to what you have to say.  Effective communication requires active listening, so practice active listening until it becomes second nature to you.

So what is active listening?  Active listening involves hearing and understanding what a person is saying to you.  Unless you understand clearly what a person is telling you, you can’t respond appropriately.  Gain clarification by asking questions or rephrase what you’re being told, so that you’re sure you fully understand the message that’s being conveyed to you.  For example, you could say “So, what you’re saying is…”

**2. Non-Verbal Communication**

The words we choose make up just 7% of the message being conveyed, which makes non-verbal communication all the more important. Body language is an important communication tool. Your body language should help convey your words.  Other factors you should consider are things like the tone of your voice, your hand gestures, and ensuring eye contact.

A person is going to be encouraged to speak openly with you if you are relaxed and have a friendly tone. Adopt an open stance position, with relaxed legs and open arms.  It is important that you make eye contact with the person you are communicating with, but be careful that you do not stare at them, as this is just uncomfortable.  It is just as important that you recognise the non-verbal signals being displayed by the other person.  These signals will give you an insight into how that person is feeling.

**3. Be Clear and Be Concise**

Convey your message using as few words as possible.  Whether in person, via telephone, or email, convey your message clearly, concise and direct. If you are excessive with your words, the listener will either lose focus or just be unsure as to what it is that you want.  Before speaking give some thought as to the message you want to convey. This will prevent you rambling and causing confusion.

**4. Be Personable**

When communicating face to face with someone, use a friendly tone with a simple smile, and ask a personal question. These things encourage the other person to engage in honest, open communication. When using written communication (e.g. email), you can achieve this by adding a simple personal message, for example, “How was your weekend?”.

**5. Be Confident**

Confidence underpins all effective communication. Other people will believe you will do as you say if you sound confident. Making eye contact, using a firm but friendly tone (never aggressive), are all ways you can exude confidence. Remember to always be listening to the other person and looking out for those nonverbal clues.

**6. Empathy**

Empathy is the skill of being able to understand and share the feelings of another person.

Even if don’t agree with the person you’re communicating with, it’s very important that you understand and respect their view. Simply saying to that person “I understand what you’re saying”, will let them know that you have been listening to them, and that you respect their point of view.

**7. Always Have An Open Mind**

Being an effective communicator requires that every conversation is approached with a flexible, open mind. This isn’t always easy to achieve, but is very important to communicating effectively. Always engage in active listening, and be sure to demonstrate empathy by acknowledging you understand what the other person’s point of view is. Adopting this approach will always ensure honest, productive communication.

**8. Convey Respect**

Other people will be more likely to engage in communication with you if you respect them and their ideas. Simply addressing another person using their name, will make them feel appreciated. If communicating via telephone, always keep focused on the conversation and avoid being distracted in any way. When communicating through email, take time to construct and edit your message, taking care to address the recipient by name.

**9. Give and Receive Feedback**

Giving and receiving appropriate feedback is an essential communication skill, particularly for those of us whose roles include managing other people. Providing constructive feedback, as well as giving someone praise, can greatly increase motivation and build morale.

It is just as important that you accept and encourage feedback from others. Always listen to feedback and act positively on it. If you’re unsure about any aspect of the feedback, simply ask a question to gain clarification from the other person.

**10. Consider The Best Medium for The Job!**

The final item on my list is knowing what the best form of communication is to use. Being mindful of using the best form of communication will result in your response being a positive one. Consider things such as, who it is you’re trying to communicate with, how important the topic is, and how busy that person might be. For example, asking your boss for a raise is never going to be taken seriously if you do it by text – so consider what’s appropriate!