

## The Way: Communication Check List

Firm handshake that goes all the way	Eye to Eye - strong - fearless but not challenging, Calm confident and self-assured -
Composure / Tone / Volume / Pauses	Listen First
Don't speak too long - Speak to the Point	Don't Interrupt
The more passionate - the more careful you need to be not to over-power, over-talk	Be nice. Work <u>with</u> people.
Seek to Understand Before Being Understood	Ask for coaching, advice, help
Acknowledge and Repeat	Answer Directly – short as possible
Ask Open Questions	Follow Up Later ok

### Communication Standards:

#### 1. Basics

- a. **Control Tone and Volume - Talk Quieter:** don't let your passion or emotion take over your voice all the time. Use Pauses in speaking – Makes what you are saying more important.
- b. **Body Language:** Open/Closed, Eyes, Present, Power Positions,
- c. **Personal Space/Touching:** Don't touch people too much or in wrong places. Arms ok. Hands, leg, etc., intimates only.
- d. **Be Open:** Need to be open for a real discussion to take place. Get Info and Change as needed.
- e. Being composed does not mean you are at ease.

#### 2. Listen -- Do **NOT** Interrupt

- a. Do not focus on your arguments, don't just wait for the person to stop talking.
- b. Really listen and think about what they are saying so you can understand their perspective.
- c. Knowing where they are coming from first will allow you to devise a frame that speaks to them.

##### **If You Don't Understand:**

- a. I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand what you just said.
- b. If people say lots of things, you just have to ask them to go back - the responsibility is on them - not on you to remember everything.
- c. It's ok at the appropriate time to assert yourself but not generally.
- d. Interrupt **ONLY** if you don't understand what was said – wait until they are done or if appropriate at the time.

#### 3. Seek to Understand before Being Understood

- a. **Acknowledge** what the other person said.
- b. **Repeat** back to them what you think they are saying
  - I. I hear you saying...
  - II. I'm trying to understand what you are saying.
  - III. Can I repeat back to you what I think I understand you are saying?

- a. I will try to explain what you just said...let me know if I am getting it.
- IV. Are you saying XYZ? / Is this what you are saying?
- V. Only after the acknowledgment, then, if needed, tell them how that made you feel.
- VI. Where are they coming from...what are the differences between you?

#### **4. If They Don't Seem to Understand You - Ask Open Questions - Let them Answer**

- i. What do you see as the main issue?
- ii. What do you think is going on?
- iii. What do you want to have happen?
- iv. What do you mean by that? Can you explain that some more?
- v. Can you give me an example?
- vi. How do you know that?
  - a. Is it from experience or research or do you just think it's true?
- vii. I hear you telling me X....can you explain why you feel that way...or how that affects this issue?
- viii. They Say things like You are an A\*\*h\*\*\*. You can say things like:
  - a. Wow, that is an aggressive statement...Why do you feel that way?
  - b. Wow, that seems very confrontational...What are you trying to accomplish?
    - a. Use a cool voice and tone. The tone should open a door for them to tell you.

#### **5. Answer Directly – Speak concisely and the Shortest Way Possible. Then Give Details as Needed.**

- a. Yes, and I can tell you why and give more details. Would you like me to explain?
- b. Yes, and in fact this is the .....
- c. The answer is 300m and here is how we came up with the answer....
- d. No, and I'll tell you why... or No, it can't be done for 2 reasons I can think of right now...
- e. Ask questions as you talk, like, Does that make sense? Are you with me?

#### **6. Asking Questions:** Remember, open-ended questions are best. Also, be sure to ask and not order or load the question.

- a. Do this for me vs. Can you do this for me, please? Or I need you to do X vs. Can you help me with X, please?

#### **7. Don't Make People Wrong:**

Say someone did not do what you asked....can say something like "John, thanks for updating the email, btw, could you use this email address or this one instead? See my email from 12/11 for more info (attached)."

#### **8. Follow Up Ok.** You don't have to answer Every Question now.

- a. I will get back to you on that ....
- b. Let me pull together everything and get back to you on that.

## 9. Opinions – Presenting Ideas:

- b. Present your idea - do it in an open way - not so firm - be diplomatic - watch voice/tone.
- c. **Condescending:** If telling people things, they already know or want can be seen as talking down to them if they already know or feel that way. Be sure to prepare with the person before offering info on something they know, etc. Show them respect, then offer it as a thought you felt like you should share...
  - 1. I know you may already know this, but I'm saying it for clarity to make sure we are on the same page.
  - 2. It may be that you know some but not all of what I am about to present. Because I don't know what you know, I feel I have to cover some of the basics.
  - 3. I know you want this to be (insert item). However, I may be seeing some issues.

## 10. Argument - Miscommunication / Having Problems Communicating

- a. Set the ground rules - go Meta - can we talk about what just happened? I feel we just had a miscommunication and would like to clear it up.
- b. Next Seek to understand the other arguments against/other ideas/etc.
  - 1. Don't just repeat yourself.
  - 2. Ask them to explain what they know.
  - 3. Find the Kernel of Truth.
  - 4. Focus on the Facts, not the misconceptions.
  - 5. Sometimes it's what you are not saying, your assumptions, something implied, not said...
  - 6. Things you are not explaining must be what are holding others up, Part of the idea was missing, etc.
  - 7. Ask questions - seek to find where the difference is / source of the miscommunication.
- c. **Respect them. What are they thinking?**
  - Affirm their self-worth before knocking down their erroneous beliefs.
  - Clarify - discuss - What are they thinking and why are they thinking it.
  - It may be that there is something implied or assumed but not stated that needs to be brought into the light.
- f. Go passive... you don't have to respond or be moved by everything.
- g. Do not be so set in your opinion that you see all others as not understanding your opinion enough.
- h. If differences...need to point out the difference between the points...
- i. State what is happening as you see it.
  - 1. What we agree on.
  - 2. What are we not agreeing on?
  - 3. Where I am coming from.
  - 4. Then say where the other one is coming from.
  - 5. My experience is XXX ...
  - 6. Not I think you should do...

## 11. Criticisms – Receiving (See 14 for more help)

- i. Defensive - Don't defend yourself - even if they misunderstand. You will be seen as defensive and they will not hear anything else.
- ii. Ask questions to find where the real issue is. (see 4)
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What exactly do you mean by that?
  - c. Compared to what?
  - d. Let me know why you feel that way?
  - e. Inquire to find out what it's really about?
- iii. I have a different experience....I thought that.....
  - a. The I Problem: If you say "I" was just trying to.... What I meant....I am just trying....I want...it makes you sound defensive.
- iv. After knowing what they are saying by asking questions, you can address the differences, or it might be settled.

## **12. Pointing out errors - Critiquing others - If there is a problem:**

- i. Don't tell people they did something wrong.
- ii. Don't do in Email/Text - Call and talk about things by asking them questions that are not accusatory just information seeking.
- iii. Say things like "looks like this did not come out right or looks like there might be an issue here."
- iv. Hey, did you know that XYZ had changed?
  - a. Do you know why XYZ happened/did not happen?
- v. Why were "the comments not moved over"?
- vi. How did this get broken?
- vii. Why did you send that email after we talked about XYZ?
  - a. Get answer then respond.... They might hang themselves.
  - b. Don't just accuse them of doing something wrong.

## **13. Negotiations**

- i. \$\$ Don't have to say your numbers.
- ii. Can say you will get back to them after you think about it, etc.
- iii. When numbers are mentioned...this is HOT topic. Take your time and think. Its ok to say I don't know...let me get back to you on this topic.
- iv. Ask questions. Do not commit to anything until you are sure, get what you can, if you don't know, ask.
- v. If important, get it in writing.

## **14. Explaining Something Complex or Potential Volatile Communication**

- i. Don't be Defensive.
- ii. Give Background – I'm bring this up because we all want this venture to be successful and I noticed this might hurt us....I don't want to create problems. I thought this was something you should know.
- iii. Explain WHY you are going to say what you are going to say.
  - a. Our experience has shown this.

- b. Let me take you through our thinking on this.
- c. This has come up before and here is what has been discussed.

#### **15. Email Protocol**

- i. Remember people are insecure, don't like confrontation, want it easy, quickly, etc.
- ii. Be nice, ask for help, advice, etc.
- iii. Keep it as short as possible
- iv. Do NOT tell someone what is wrong with what they did in an email
- v. Don't offer advice on what you think they should do.
- vi. If difficulties, ask for meeting via email.
- vii. Do not criticize or critique someone in email – even if not the person but something they did, researched, etc.

#### **Listening and Seeking to Understand Others Helps in Many Ways**

- Through understanding others, we might learn something we did not know or see before.
- We might find a better frame in which to talk with them later.
- We might find the fact that is different and thereby reconciling an understanding.
- It will help us learn about the person which can help us bond more deeply.
- We can learn things about ourselves that we could not otherwise.
- It can help us get clarification and fix any miscommunication.
- Their ideas added to our ideas can make everything better.
- We might change our mind and find a better way.
- There might be something in there we can use.
- Clarifying the differences can help us find better ways to communicate and what the objections are that need to be overcome, etc.
  - Also, it's important to be open, as we can't have a real discussion or generally learn if we are closed minded. Ask ourselves, do we just want for the other person to agree with us and just confirm our thinking or do we want to possibly learn something and see other perspectives. Do we want a real discussion?
  - Are we open to reason, logic, facts, and to change in the face of newly discovered truths?