

FIVE SECRETS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

LISTENING SKILLS

1.	THE DISARMING TECHNIQUE.	You find some truth in what the other person is saying, even if you feel convinced that what they're saying is totally wrong, unreasonable, irrational, or unfair.
2.	EMPATHY.	You put yourself in the other person's shoes and try to see the world through his or her eyes.
	THOUGHT EMPATHY.	You paraphrase the other person's words.
	FEELING EMPATHY.	You acknowledge how they're probably feeling, given what they are saying to you.
3.	INQUIRY.	You ask gentle, probing questions to learn more about what the other person is thinking and feeling.

SELF-EXPRESSION SKILLS

4.	"I FEEL" STATEMENTS.	You express your feelings with "I feel" statements (such as "I feel upset") rather than with "you" statements (such as "You're wrong!" or "You're making me furious!")
5.	STROKING.	You find something genuinely positive to say to the other person, even in the heat of the battle. This indicates that you respect the other person, even though you may be angry with each other.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BAD COMMUNICATION

1.	TRUTH	You insist that you are “right” and the other person is “wrong.”
2.	BLAME	You say that the problem is the other person’s fault.
3.	MARTYRDOM	You claim that you’re an innocent victim.
4.	PUT-DOWN	You imply that the other person is a loser because he or she “always” or “never” does certain things.
5.	HOPELESSNESS	You give up and insist there’s no point in trying.
6.	DEMANDINGNESS	You say you’re entitled to better treatment but you refuse to ask for what you want in a direct, straightforward way.
7.	DENIAL	You insist that you don’t feel angry, hurt, or sad when you really do.
8.	PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE	You pout or withdraw or say nothing. You may storm out of the room or slam doors.
9.	SELF-BLAME	Instead of dealing with the problem, you act as if you’re an awful, terrible person.
10.	HELPING	Instead of hearing how depressed, hurt, or angry the other person feels, you try to “solve the problem” or “help.”
11.	SARCASM	Your words or tone of voice convey tension or hostility which you aren’t openly acknowledging.
12.	SCAPEGOATING	You suggest that the other person has “a problem” and that you’re sane, happy, and uninvolved in the conflict.
13.	DEFENSIVENESS	You refuse to admit any wrong-doing or imperfection.
14.	COUNTERATTACK	Instead of acknowledging how the other person feels, you respond to their criticism by criticizing them.
15.	DIVERSION	Instead of dealing with how you both feel in the here-and-now, you list grievances about past injustices.

TEN ATTITUDES THAT PREVENT YOU FROM LISTENING

1.	TRUTH	You believe that you are right and the other person is wrong. You are preoccupied with proving your point instead of expressing your angry feelings more directly or trying to grasp how the other person is thinking and feeling.
2.	BLAME	You believe that the problem is the other person's fault. You feel overwhelmingly convinced that you're completely innocent and tell yourself that you have every right to blame him or her.
3.	NEED TO BE A VICTIM	You feel sorry for yourself and think that other people are treating you unfairly because of their insensitivity and selfishness. Your stubborn unwillingness to do anything assertive to make the situation better gives people the impression that you like the role of martyr.
4.	SELF-DECEPTION	You cannot imagine that you contribute to a problem because you cannot see the impact of your behavior on others. For example, you may complain that your wife nags you, but you don't think about the fact that you repeatedly "forget" to follow through on your promise to repair the fence. You may complain that your husband is dogmatic and stubborn and unwilling to listen to your ideas, but you don't notice that you constantly contradict everything he tries to say.
5.	DEFENSIVENESS	You are so fearful of criticism that you can't stand to hear anything negative or disagreeable. Instead of listening and trying to find some truth in the other person's point of view, you have to argue and defend yourself.
6.	COERCION SENSITIVITY	You are afraid of giving in or being bossed around. Other people seem controlling and domineering, and you feel that you must dig in your heels and resist them.
7.	DEMANDINGNESS	You feel entitled to better treatment from others, and you get frustrated when they do not treat you as you expected. Instead of trying to understand what really motivates them, you insist that they are being unreasonable and have no right to feel and act the way they do.
8.	SELFISHNESS	You want what you want when you want it, and you throw a tantrum if you don't get it. You are not especially interested in what others may be thinking and feeling.

9.	MISTRUST	You put up a wall because you believe you will be taken advantage of if you listen and try to grasp what the other person is thinking and feeling.
10.	HELP ADDICTION	You feel the need to help people when all they want is to be listened to. When friends or family members complain about how bad they feel, you make “helpful” suggestions and tell them what to do. Instead of being appreciative, they get annoyed and continue to complain. You both end up feeling frustrated.

TEN ATTITUDES THAT KEEP YOU FROM EXPRESSING YOUR FEELINGS

1.	CONFLICT PHOBIA	You are afraid of angry feelings or conflicts with people. You may believe that people with good relationships shouldn't fight or argue. You may also believe that the people you care about would be hurt and couldn't take it if you told them how you felt or what was really on your mind. I call this the "ostrich phenomenon," because you bury your head in the sand instead of dealing with the problems in your relationship.
2.	EMOTIONAL PERFECTIONISM	You believe that you shouldn't have irrational feelings like anger, jealousy, depression, or anxiety. You think you should always be rational and in control of your emotions. You are afraid of being exposed as weak and vulnerable. You believe that people will look down on you if they find out how you really feel.
3.	FEAR OF DISAPPROVAL AND REJECTION	You are so terrified by rejection and ending up alone that you'd rather swallow your feelings and put up with some abuse than take the chance of making anyone mad at you. You feel an excessive need to please people and to meet everyone's expectations. You are afraid that people would not like you if you expressed your own ideas and feelings.
4.	PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVENESS	You pout and hold your hurt and angry feelings inside instead of sharing them openly and honestly. You give others the silent treatment and try to make them feel guilty instead of sharing your feelings.
5.	HOPELESSNESS	You feel convinced that your relationship cannot improve no matter what you do, so you give up. You may feel that you've already tried everything and nothing works. You may believe that your spouse is just too stubborn and insensitive to be able to change. This acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Once you give up, things get stuck and you conclude that things really are hopeless.
6.	LOW SELF-ESTEEM	You believe that you aren't entitled to express your feelings or to ask others for what you want. You think you should always please other people and meet their expectations.
7.	SPONTANEITY	You believe that you have the right to say precisely what you think and feel when you are upset. You may feel that any change in the way you communicate will sound phony and ridiculous.

8.	MIND READING	You believe that people should know how you feel and what you want without having to express yourself directly. This gives you a perfect excuse to hold your feelings inside and to feel resentful because people don't seem to care about your wants or needs.
9.	MARTYRDOM	You are afraid to admit that you're angry, because you don't want to give anyone the satisfaction of knowing they've upset you. You take enormous pride in controlling your emotions and suffering silently.
10.	NEED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS	When you have a conflict with someone, you go around and around in circles trying to solve the problem instead of sharing your feelings openly and hearing how the other person feels.