

# Effective Communication

## Education Week 2008 Kevin R. Miller

**“Man’s supreme achievement in the world is communication from personality to personality.”**

**-- Karl Jasper, German Philosopher**

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. – 1 Timothy 6:18

But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. – Hebrews 13:16

**Communication is simply any connection between human beings.**

*“In my experience I have learned that the greatest difficulty that exists in the little bickerings and strifes of man with man, woman with woman, children with children, parents with children, brothers with sisters, and sisters with brothers, arises from the want of rightly understanding each other.”*  
– President Brigham Young

**1. Only by the Spirit can we communicate perfectly.**

Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth? Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.

– D&C 50:21-23

...for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men. – 2 Nephi 33:1

“We create many negative situations by simply assuming that our expectations are self-evident and that they are clearly understood and shared by other people.” – Stephen R.

Covey, *the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

**2. Four Basic Types of Communication**

Aggressive Communication: aims to invade, control and take advantage of another

Passive Communication: aims to allow others to invade, take advantage, and control, with the speaker’s consent.

Passive-Aggressive Communication: aims to manipulate others by indirect, dishonest messages

Assertive Communication: aims to express thoughts, feelings and beliefs openly, honestly, directly and appropriately.

**3. Communicate with Confidence**

- Be direct and to the point
- Show consideration, respect, and recognition of the other person
- Focus on specifics. Explain your actions and feelings
- Make it a two-way discussion

**Five basic needs of every person**

1. I am of worth (intrinsic and unconditional)
2. My thoughts, feelings, ideas and perceptions matter, and have been considered
3. Someone really cares about me
4. What I am doing is making a difference in the world
5. My agency is being honored

**They may not remember what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel.**

– Anonymous

**4. You messages**

- You messages accuse, control and attack others:
- Why are you always so late?
- Why did you spill the milk?
- You agree with me don’t you?
- You really don’t believe what you are saying do you?

**5. The Five Step I-Message Format**

1. I feel \_\_\_\_\_ 2. when you \_\_\_\_\_ 3. because \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you feel about it AND
5. What can we do to solve it?

Examples:

- I feel discouraged and sad when the counter is left so messy after snack-time because it makes more work for me.
- When the counter isn’t clean after snack-time, I feel very hurt and annoyed because it makes more work for me.
- I feel distracted, concerned and annoyed when you are late getting to work, because the office appears unprofessional to our customers and it makes more work for others.

**Always respect the agency and choice of both.**

**6. Communication Aids**

These five things clearly distinguish those who communicate well:

- Self Concept: A positive self-concept is necessary for healthy and satisfying communications with others.
- Listening: Effective listening only occurs when you discern and understand the meaning expressed by the speaker. Listening integrates the physical, emotional, and intellectual inputs toward the understanding of the meaning.
- Clarity of Expression: If you have a clear picture in your mind of what you want to communicate, you can communicate your meaning effectively to another.
- Dealing with Angry Feelings: Emotions should not be repressed and they should be identified, observed, reported, and integrated. We need to express our feelings in a way that will influence, affirm, reshape, and change ourselves and others.
- Self-Disclosure: the ability to talk truthfully about yourself is necessary for effective communication.

**Caution!!!!**

Avoid accusations, evaluations or absolutes!

- Accusation: “Your problem is...”
- Absolutes: “You always...”

- Evaluative: “I think you will never...”

## 7. Other tools for clearly communicating

- **Anticipate Objections:** “I know we had problems keeping in our budget last year, but I think we have resolved them and can afford this vacation this year.”
- **Appeal to other’s Self Interest:** “Helping on this family project will also satisfy one of your requirements for the Citizenship in the Community merit badge...isn’t that one you’re working on?”
- **Set Limits:** “I can promise only two hours on Tuesday to assist you in your homework project. We’ll need to keep my involvement within that parameter.”
- **State Clear Consequences:** “If we can’t get your grades up by Christmas, which I think we can, you’ll have to quit your after-school job, which means you won’t be able to afford your part of the car insurance and will lose your driving privileges for a while.”

## 8. Use “AND” not “BUT”

“You’ve really been doing a great job in the office AND now I want to help you do even better in the area of telephone skills.”

## 9. Principles of Effective Listening

- Listen actively
- Listen with empathy
- Listen critically
- Listen for total meaning
- Listen with an open mind

## Active Listening:

Active listening is the process of sending back to the speaker what the listener thinks the speaker meant both in content and feelings.

- Helps ensure understanding
- Shows interest/respect
- Validates everyone’s feelings
- Allows an elaboration and further exploration of feelings
- Prompts listener to go deeper into own mind for solutions

## Don’ts for Listeners

- Interrupt

- Be judgmental or criticize
- Say, or even imply, that the sender’s feelings are incorrect or unimportant
- Inject your opinion (unless it is specifically requested—and then only as little as possible)
- PREACH

*He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances. –D&C: 52:16*

“We do not really listen to each other . . . at least not all the time. Instead of true dialogue, we carry on two parallel monologues. I talk. My companion talks. But what we are really concentrating on is how to sound good, how to make our points strongly, how to outshine the person with whom we are talking.”  
–The Christopher’s, in Prayer to Be a Better listener

## 10. Giving and Receiving useful feedback

Receiving Useful Feedback:

- View the situation as a unique learning opportunity! Be receptive.
- Listen to understand the other person even if you disagree.
- Ask for specific behavior to illustrate feedback.
- Restate their comments to ensure understanding. Check to ensure clear communication.
- Be positive. Say “thank you!” Appreciate the other person’s point of view
- Keep confidences and assume others will also.

## 11. Giving useful feedback:

- Be sure that the receiver wants to receive feedback.
- Provide appropriate positive reinforcement
- Be specific
- Maintain the self-esteem of the receiver during the feedback process. State feedback in behavioral terms.
- Suggest an alternative behavior when providing “negative” information.
- Provide feedback on behaviors the person can do something about.
- Check to ensure clear communication.

- Time your feedback appropriately. Give feedback as soon after a behavior as occurred or just prior to when the person is likely to repeat the behavior.

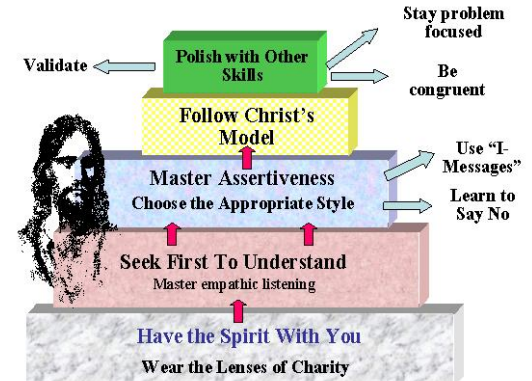
## 12. Learn to say “no”

- “I’ll say no this time, but I value scouting very much so could I drive to the campout next month?”
- “I’ll say no this time but I value our friendship so could we plan to do something next week instead?”
- “If you really need an answer now, its no. Would you like me to take more time to think about it?”
- Hint: do not make excuses or say things that make you sound powerless. You have the right to say no!

## 13. Thoughts on Communication

- A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. – Proverbs 15:1
- Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. – Colossians 4:6
- Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. – James 1:19
- “Many a man would rather you heard his story than grant his request.” – Lord Chesterfield
- “It seems rather incongruous that in a society of supersophisticated communications, we often suffer from a shortage of listeners.”

## A Communication Model



– Erma Bombeck

## 13: For Further Study:

- Crucial Conversations and Crucial Confrontations by Patterson, Grenny.
- The Art of Giving and Receiving Criticism: By John L. Lund
- You Don't Have to Make Everything All Better by Gary and Joy Lundberg