

How to Stay COOL When Things Heat UP!

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Jan M. McLaughlin, CSP



Jan@YourCommunicationConnection.com

206.818.6689

Essential communication skills



The greatest problem with communication is the assumption that it has taken place.

—George Bernard Shaw

Common deviations from our intent:

- Defending ourselves
- Saving face
- Seeking revenge
- Avoiding embarrassment
- Wanting to win...

What lies in our power to do, lies in our power not to do.

—Aristotle

4 important factors in communication

1 Intent
Purpose—what you want to have happen

2 Criteria, Expectations or Needs
Relevant factors to be taken into consideration

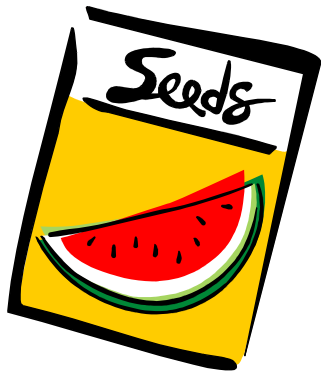
3 Content
Subject—what you end up talking about

4 Process
How we **look** _____ %
How we **sound** _____ %
Words we **choose** _____ %



IF our message is incongruent!

Focus on a specific situation



Practice: Think of a recent exchange you had with someone when things heated up. Focus on a situation where you weren't pleased with the outcome or how you dealt with the situation. **This is for your eyes only!**

Describe the **SITUATION**—focus on the facts

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How did you **EXPLAIN** this situation to yourself? What meaning did you give this event? How did you interpret it?

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Situation

What **EMOTIONS** came up? How did you feel?

Explanation

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Emotion

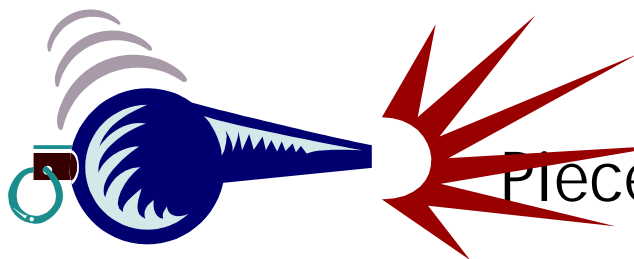
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Do

What did you **DO**? Focus on specific, observable behavior.

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Communication works for those who work at it.
—John Powell



Pieces of the process

The sound of your voice

Tape yourself... yes, that's how you sound! Check your

*What you are thunders so,
I cannot hear what you say.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Body language and facial expressions

■ A _____ is the most important expression for communicating.

■ If we avoid _____ with people, they may perceive us as dishonest, uninterested or cold.

* Be sure to keep cultural differences in mind!

Avoid gestures that are

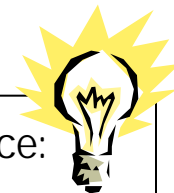
- ▶ Aggressive
- ▶ Extraneous
- ▶ Or communicate resistance

Tone

Volume

Pitch

Pace



Listen to your voice:

1.

2.

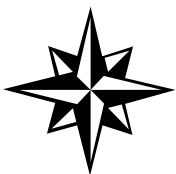
a.

b.

3.

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Think about the situation you described. How might the way you looked and the way you sounded have helped escalate the situation?

Looked.

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Sounded.

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Reduce the differences...improve communication



“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”
—Stephen R. Covey



What about you? Do others perceive you as someone who listens? Or, do you appear distracted, uninterested or eager to end the conversation?

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Clarifying

Asking **open-ended questions**—who, when, where, what, how—to gain a better understanding of the other person’s position and move them toward a solution. Be careful with “why” questions—they can be perceived as accusatory, putting the other person on the defensive!

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Pacing

To **subtly mirror** the communication style of the other person—their posture, facial expressions, gestures and the pace, volume and energy of their voice. *Special note: You do not ape or mimic them!*

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Backtracking

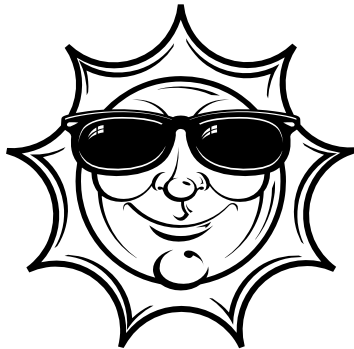
Similar to paraphrasing only you concentrate on using some of their **actual words**. These are called **essence words**—when you use their essence words, they feel heard. **Single out** by repeating a word they use and following that with an open-ended question—especially if you’ve received a single-word answer to a previous question.

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Practice: In groups of three, **Person A**, ask **Person B**, “**What do you consider your greatest challenge when things heat up?**” **Person B** tell them whatever you think is important for them to know about you. **Person A**, your job is to **listen actively**—employing attentive body language and facial expressions while practicing pacing, backtracking and clarifying. **Person C**, you are the observer. **Please note specifically** how **Person A** uses pacing, backtracking and clarifying and how their body language and facial expressions let **Person B** know they were listening

You will have **four minutes**. At the end of that time, **Person C** will share specific examples of what they observed.

Keep Your COOL!



Perception Checking

- State your observation
- Offer your interpretation
- Ask for verification or clarification



WII-fm

Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.
—Albert Einstein

Exercise Verbal Aikido

A form of martial arts, the goal of Aikido is to unify mind, body and spirit to effectively neutralize an attack while maintaining the safety of the attacker and defender. When attacked—**accept, redirect and affirm.** In other words, **when pushed, pull; when pulled, push.**

▶ Selective Agreement

- Look for something you *can* agree with in what the person is saying
- “You may be right, _____”

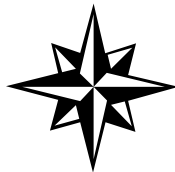
▶ Limited Response

- Respond only to the **subject** of the remark, not the **emotion** behind it
- This is an excellent technique for responding to sarcasm!

Stress the benefits to them

▶ Condition/benefit

“We / I will / can
if / when you will / do”



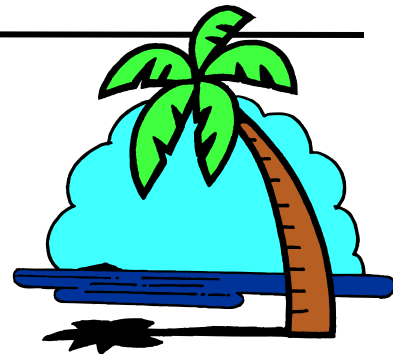
Think about the situation you described. Could you have applied any of these techniques?

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Take care of yourself

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.
—Eleanor Roosevelt

No matter what you do or say to me, I'm still a worthwhile person.
—Jack Canfield

You grow up the day you have your first real laugh at yourself.
—Ethel Barrymore

■ Psychological

- Visualizations

- Symbols

- Intercepts

- Reaffirm your intent—what question will you ask yourself?

■ Physical...remember to breathe!

- Sit quietly—with both feet on the floor if in a chair, perhaps legs crossed if on the floor
- Relax hands—hold nothing—resting them on knees or in lap
- Close your eyes
- Initially, for practice, place your palm flat on the front of your waist between the bottom of your ribcage and your abdomen.
- Breathe in through your nose with your mouth closed
- Feel your rib cage expand as your shoulders remain still (that's your diaphragm expanding)
- Exhale slooooooowly through your slightly open mouth—pulling your diaphragm toward your spine.
- Now try inhaling to a count of 3. Hold for 1 count. Exhale to a count of 3. Hold for 1 count.
- Breathe rhythmically

■ And laughing...

- Exercise for your internal organs!



Your action plan

Look back at your situation on page 3 and ask yourself:

What was my intent? What did I want to have happen?

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What might I have done to help *create* that difficult situation?

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What could I have said or done to *turn around* the exchange?

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What do I need to do to calm myself when faced with this situation—or a similar one—again?

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You cannot teach a person anything. You can only help them discover it in themselves.
—Galileo

Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.
—Mark Twain

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.
—Michael McGriffey, MD

Suggested reading

- Banville, Thomas G. *How To Listen—How To Be Heard*. Nelson-Hall, Chicago, 1978. (Note: out of print—check Amazon)
- Barnes, B. Kim. *Exercising Influence: A Guide for Making Things Happen at Work, at Home, and in Your Community*. Pfeiffer, A Wiley Imprint, SF, 2007.
- Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. Simon & Schuster, NY, 1936 & 1981.
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- Decker, Bert. *You've Got To Be Believed To Be Heard*. St. Martin's Press, NY, 1992.
- Fleming, Dr. Carol. *The Sound of Your Voice*. Simon & Schuster Sound Ideas, NY, 1988. (CD or tape series available at many libraries or www.speechtraining.com)
- Goldsmith, Marshall. *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. Hyperion, NY, 2007.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Dell, NY, 1995. You can download Goleman's article, *What Makes a Leader?* as a pdf for \$6.50 at hbr.org
- Mackoff, Barbara, Ph. D. *What Mona Lisa Knew*. (Humor) Lowell House, Los Angeles, 1990. (Note: out of print—check Amazon)
- Morgan, Nick. *Trust Me: Four Steps to Authenticity and Charisma*. Jossey-Bass, SF, 2009.
- Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler. *Crucial Conversations*. McGraw-Hill. NY, 2002.
- Pease, Barbara and Pease, Allan, *The Definitive Book of Body Language*. Bantam Books, NY, 2006.
- Seligman, Martin E.P., Ph.D. *Learned Optimism*. Simon & Schuster, NY, 1990.
- Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand*. William Morrow & Co., Inc., NY, 1990.
Talking from 9 to 5. 1994.

www.crucialconversations.com for *Style Under Stress* assessment and role-play rehearsals

<http://www.yourcommunicationconnection.com/preview.htm>
for links to Jan's blog posts and tweets for support

