



COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

1

Communication Skills Development

Communication Skills are one of the most important life skills we can learn, but not necessarily the one in which we put a lot of effort in. You may have memorized endless lists of vocabulary, you may know all the grammar needed to hold any conversation and still find yourself at a loss when wanting to express yourself. Because talking out effectively, and in a manner understood by all, is a whole new ball game!

We all know that Effective Communication skills are fundamental to succeed in many aspects of life. Many jobs require strong communication skills and people with good communication skills usually enjoy better interpersonal relationships with friends and family. Whether you want to have better conversations in your social life or get your ideas across better at work, there are some ideas that you can follow to help you out.

2

Listen and Empathize

The best thing you can do to improve your communication skills is to learn to really listen—to pay attention and let the other person talk without interrupting. Yes, most of us love to talk, and listening can sometimes seem like an unnecessary chore, but when you listen, you understand the other person, and that will help you channel your conversation better. Remember, “A good conversation is a bunch of words elegantly connected with listening.” So, even if you are two different people, with different communication styles that don't match, you will find that at least you're both working off the same page.

Another important point is to empathize. Communication is a two-way street. If you think from the other person's shoes, you can reduce the difficulty and anxiety that sometimes arises when trying to truly communicate with others. Developing empathy helps you better understand even the unspoken parts of your communication with others, and helps you respond more effectively.

3

Bye – Bye Conversation Fillers, Hello Scripts!

Conversation filters are plan Z. Always. They don't help much, they might just make the entire conversation a little awkward. Fillers like Um's and ah's do little to improve your speech or everyday conversations. They show a lack of confidence, so cut them out to be more persuasive and feel or appear more confident. When you find yourself using too many fillers, try taking your hands out of your pockets or simply relaxing and pausing before you speak. Those silences seem more awkward to you than they do to others, trust us.

Another trick up your sleeve can be scripts! Not elaborate ones, just small pre-thought of chits of conversation that will help you. Small talk is an art that not many people have mastered. For the inevitable, awkward silences with people you hardly know, it helps to have a plan. There is a well-known idea called FORD - Family, Occupation, Recreation, and Dreams. These are topics that you can convert to small talk. Lure the other person into a conversation by sharing information that could help you and the other person find common ground.

4

No Distractions, and Proper Body Language

What's worse than awkward silences, is rude behaviour. While talking to someone, maintain eye contact, it means you are listening, and are invested in the conversation. It's pretty rude to use your phone while someone's talking to you or you're supposed to be hanging out with them. Best would be to put away technology completely, but just taking the time to look up at the person, talk to them and just talk to each other!

Another vital part of improving your communication skills is Body Language. You tell your partner you're open to discussion but your crossed arms say you are hostile. Our non-verbal and non-written cues often reveal more than we think they do. Always remember that you are constantly communicating even when you're not saying a word. There is a well-known trick that can be of help. Think about your toes! Or adopt a power pose if you need to boost your confidence before a big talk. Small tells are actually huge ones!

5

Brief and Specific or Maybe Tell a Story

Here is a famously known tip that can help. The acronym for BRIEF - Background, Reason, Information, End, Follow-up. Though ideally used for written communication, it can also help with verbal. After all, Clear and Concise are two of the 7 Cs of communication, along with concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous!

Yes, we are talking about two different things here, opposing in fact, but they are applicable to different situations. Stories are powerful. They activate our brains, make presentations less boring make us more persuasive, and can even help us ace interviews. Learn the secrets of becoming a phenomenal storyteller, tip – use the word “but” more to structure your narrative! Tell us your story!

6

Mind your Language!

Acronyms are fun! And it is okay to use acronyms and informal language when you are communicating with a friend. But they have no place during discussions with your boss! “Hey,” “TTYL” – Bye-Bye! Not only are they unnecessary, but they can also not be known by the person you are talking to. You cannot assume that the other person knows what the acronym means.

Jokes help! Yes, they do. Laughing releases endorphins that can help relieve stress and anxiety. People like to laugh, well most of them at least, and are drawn to people who can make them laugh. So, don't be afraid to be funny or clever, but do ensure your humour is appropriate to the situation. Use your sense of humour to break the ice, to lower barriers and gain the affection of others. By using appropriate humour you will be perceived as more charismatic. So, leave behind your black jokes, or the more adult ones, clean and fun humour is always appreciated!

Another thing to follow is using encouraging language! Offer words and actions of encouragement, as well as praise to others. Make other people feel welcome, wanted, valued and appreciated in your communications. If you let others know that they are valued, they are much more likely to give you their best. Try to ensure that everyone involved in an interaction or communication is included through effective body language and the use of open questions!

