

Communication without Violence: Facilitators Manual

Communication is the key to a harmonious relationship. If we hide everything inside us and do not communicate, we are likely to live in darkness.

Q: What issues are there in communication with family, friends, neighbors and strangers?

Issues in Communication:

- others will not get to know what we are thinking ,
- we will not make ourselves understood by others.
- Do you not feel terribly alone this way?
- For some people, it is the problem of not knowing how to communicate.
- For others, it may be that they are too afraid to talk about their problems, share their views, and let others know what is going on in their mind.

In fact, without communication, our relationships with others are likely to be dominated by suspicion, guesses, misunderstanding and false assumptions.

Lack of communication breeds problems in our relationships.

Assumption in communication:

- We tend to assume others know what we want or how we feel.
- Then when they do not react as we think they should, we get upset.
- We are annoyed when others may not even know why!
- We expect people to understand us.

The truth is they do not understand us, if we choose to believe that ideas can get across at the unspoken level!

All too often, the communication between us, and our loved ones, is merely functional – out of necessity. We waste many opportunities to enhance our understanding of each other and improve our relationships.

Q: How is our communication with our family members?

Scenario:

For instance, if you are used to your mother cooking everyday, and assume it is her role to cook so there is no need to feel special about it, she may increasingly find cooking a chore. Do you know each time your mother goes into the kitchen, she actually injects her affection into the food by choosing the type of vegetables or ingredients you like? Do you know that each time she dishes out the food, she silently hopes you will enjoy it and tell her how good it was?

But nothing is more powerful than language at that moment if you can simply say: “Mum, it’s delicious, I love it!” You will make her day! You can do it everyday to make her feel appreciated, even though it is not in your culture, or habit.

Q: What are the traditional methods used in communicating in the families and how has it affected the way the young people?

Consequence of non-communication

Silence is like a time bomb, which may explode one day at the slightest provocation. We all have a part to play in triggering its explosion. If you can reduce your part, you are helping to deaden the bomb.

Silence does not help to resolve problems. On the contrary, it breeds bitterness. When our heart is bitter, we cannot be happy and loving, even though we can suppress the bitterness to pretend we are fine. If you do not begin to make a change though, the silent relationship pattern will go on from generation to generation. It will stay the same with your parents, with your future wife or husband, and children of your own...

We all have fears, worries, and concerns; talking with somebody we trust is an effective way to relieve ourselves of mental stress. If you can share your inner world with others, you may find out you are not alone – others have the same problems. That makes us feel instantly better.

How do you tell?

Being positive and appreciative

It's important to express our needs, desires, fears and opinions, when we wish to obtain support or help. Our emotional needs can only be satisfied by feedback from people in our lives, in particular, our loved ones. What nurtures relationships is being positive and appreciative. Being positive doesn't only mean saying good things, rather, it means looking at people or issues in a positive way even though there are problems to resolve.

Being appreciative means being able to feel grateful for what others are doing for you, no matter how small a favour it is. It makes people feel good for helping you, or being with you. That is the engine that keeps a relationship going.

Communication and Empathy

Effective communication is built on empathy – the ability to sense the need and feeling in another person. However, when there is a conflict of needs between ourselves and others, and we want to persuade others to accept our views or make a compromise, we need to analyse what is the priority and what are the factors to be taken out (ie. critical thinking). Then we can find the most convincing way (creative thinking) to express ourselves.

How to resolve conflicts?

One major source of teenager's frustration is their inability to cope with the conflicts they face in their daily lives. What prevents young people from behaving assertively might be the fear of negative consequences, such as ridicule, dismissal, a fight, or strained relation. That fear may compel them to keep quiet or say "yes" to everything simply to avoid conflict or "wrongdoings".

Avoiding conflict is not the way to resolve it. It's only a short-term solution with a longterm negative impact on our mental well-being. When we are taken advantage of, we feel angry or frustrated with ourselves, feel hurt, and possibly indulge in self-pity. These feelings are directed inwards at our-selves,

and lead to increased turmoil within which, if not let out, may intensify psychosomatic problems, such as headaches and backache.

In many cases, it is our lack of courage to speak up that allows others to take advantage of us or impose their demands on us. Being silent erodes our self-esteem and confidence, and jeopardises our chances of fulfilling our dreams, achieving success, and leading a better life.

Win/win strategy the secret weapon of negotiation

The world is not a fixed pie. The assumption – I lose, you gain or I gain, you lose – is rarely true. Rather than vie for a bigger share of the pie, to gain more than you, why can't we expand the pie? That way, everyone will be better off!

Conflict resolution today is more about satisfying the needs and wants of both parties, that is, finding a win/win solution, rather than beating the other party down. It is based on the belief that your needs are as important as the other person's, and you do not necessarily have to lose if others win. When there is a conflict of interest or needs, it helps to go through the following three steps in negotiation to reach an acceptable outcome for both parties:

1. Clarify the needs of both sides. When people put forward their suggestions to you, they may not make it clear what their needs are. You can ask, "What's the problem?" or "Why is it so?" When you understand the other person's needs, you can also state what you need and explain why it is important to you.
2. Accept needs. It's important that you show the other person you accept their needs as valid by saying, "I understand it's important for you to..." or "I recognise your need to..." By doing so, you soften up the other person, who will become more willing to accept your needs in return. This makes it possible for you to focus on the issue of how to meet the needs on both sides.
3. Find a solution of mutual gain by exploring the next best alternatives. Most situations have win/win outcomes only if the people involved are prepared to give some time to identify them. To achieve it, both you and the other party will have to accept the validity of each other's needs and claims. Many conflicts arise because none of the parties are willing to listen to the other and recognise the other person's needs as being important as their own.

Principles of persuasion

Negotiation is a skill. It is an intelligent way of getting what you want without getting into conflict with others. Negotiation is inseparable from good communication skills, not only expressing an idea clearly and appropriately, but expressing it well. That means you also keep the other party's interest in mind when presenting your viewpoint. There are principles, which we call "the principles of persuasion", that can help improve your chances of getting others to agree. That is, getting others to say "Yes!" to you. You may have already applied many of those principles in your daily lives unknowingly. These principles are also widely used by advertising and marketing professionals to persuade consumers to buy their products and services!

a. Authority

There is, within us all, a deep sense of duty to authority. We are trained from birth that obedience to

proper authority is right, and disobedience is wrong. The essential message fills the parental lessons and school – stories, and songs of our childhood, and is carried forward in schools, in our community as we grow into adulthood. Our automatic response to authority is most apparent in daily interaction with others. We tend to react to another person's title, clothes, or those with a luxurious car or a big house.

b. Social proof

We determine what is correct usually because other people think it is correct. The principle applies especially to the way we decide what constitutes correct behaviour. What it means is we tend to follow collective action, and yield to the pressure of the majority.

c. Commitment & consistency

We have a strong desire to stand by a position or viewpoint after we have taken action. Once we have made a choice or taken a stand, we tend to encounter personal and interpersonal pressure to behave consistently with that commitment. Those pressures will cause us to respond in ways that justify our earlier decision.

d. Liking

As a rule, we prefer to say “Yes” to the request of someone we know and like. Astonishingly, total strangers use this simple rule, in hundreds of different ways to get us to comply with their requests.

e. Reciprocation

We generally, try to repay, in kind, what other people have given us. For example, if we receive a birthday gift from a friend, we tend to want to send a gift to that friend on his or her birthday. This rule explains why it's such a gratifying experience when we do something for others in return for their kindness

Q: Dealing with bullies

1. Have you ever encountered bullies?
2. If yes, who are they? Do you do you deal with them?
3. What are the usual types of bullies in our lives? How should we deal with them?

Q: Resolve conflicts — apply a win-win strategy in your daily life

Ask each participant to describe one case of conflict they have experienced or are facing now. Encourage them to come up with a win-win solution, or use the six principles of persuasion to resolve conflicts.

Learn to express yourself cultivate your ability to communicate through daily interactions with others

Q : Ask the participants whether they have regrets that they should have expressed on a particular occasion, but didn't? What were the consequences of their failure to communicate? If a similar situation arises now, how will they tackle it differently?