



Monthly Productivity & Balance Newsletter | April 2018

Mastering Effective Communication

Communication is important in every aspect of our lives. From interacting with coworkers in an office or presenting to clients, to speaking with family and friends, we communicate all day. Though communication is a part of our daily routine, effective communication is a skill that often requires effort. Follow the tips below to become a more effective communicator.

Be Clear and Concise

Say exactly what you mean. This may seem simple, but writing and speaking clearly and concisely is the best way to ensure others understand you. Using unnecessary words or going into too much detail can cause the reader or listener to get distracted or confused. For example, before sending an email think about what you want your reader to know and craft your sentences as clearly as possible.

Show Confidence

Be confident. Speaking in a confident tone shows the listener that you believe what you are saying. If a listener believes you are speaking honestly, they are more likely to understand your message and consider your viewpoint. Showing confidence is as easy as making eye contact and using a firm yet friendly tone. Written communication should also make the reader feel as though you are confident in the statements or suggestions you are making. To show confidence in emails and memos, the text should consist of concise statements rather than long questions.

Monitor Nonverbal Communication

Stay aware of your body language. Maintain eye contact and stand or sit in a relaxed, open stance without your arms crossed. Eye contact demonstrates that you are offering your full attention to the conversation,

while holding a relaxed and open stance shows that you are open to listen to the other person's message. Keep your tone light and friendly and encourage the other person to speak openly with you. It is also important to pay attention to nonverbal cues from the other person. This allows you to adjust your message or tone if you notice that they are looking away or appear uncomfortable.

Be Open-Minded

Consider the other person's viewpoint. A good communicator is willing to put their own opinions aside to view a situation differently. Rather than focusing solely on expressing your message, pause to acknowledge and understand the other person's statements. A dialogue is only productive if both individuals are willing to discuss a topic. Ultimately, a productive discussion cannot occur without open dialogue and a willingness to remain flexible and open-minded.

Request and Give Feedback

Share your opinion and ask for others to do the same. Whether you are speaking with someone face-to-face, exchanging emails, or giving a presentation to a large group, you should always ask for feedback. This may be as simple as asking someone if they think you are explaining your message clearly. Feedback, such as constructive criticism or praise in the workplace, offers insight into how you can become a

better communicator. The most important part of requesting feedback is acknowledging and accepting the information you receive and taking steps to improve your skills.

Choose the Best Medium

Pick the most appropriate form of communication. Before you call, email or speak in-person with someone, take a moment to decide what type of communication is needed. If you are offering a quick update to a coworker or requesting information about an event, an email may be the best way to reach out. For important discussions a face-to-face meeting may be the best way to communicate.

Actively Listen

Listen to what others have to say. The most important aspect of communication is actually to stay quiet and listen. To have a productive discussion, you must acknowledge, consider, and respond to information you are offered. Active listening shows respect and allows you to offer appropriate responses.

Whether you are giving a presentation or having a casual conversation with a coworker, effective communication can ultimately make or break a conversation.

For more information about effective communication or to reach a Behavioral Health or Work/Life Expert, contact eni

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