



# Communication Cornerstones™

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## Affirmations to improve your written business communications:

- I will dare to use short, snappy sentences in my business writing to wake people up. Short is powerful.
- I will create a mini custom thesaurus for my desk by choosing eight words I commonly use in my business writing, and finding at least six exciting alternatives for each.
- I will stop being adjective-happy and try to eliminate "very," "really" and "just" from my writing.
- I will avoid using unnecessarily complex or obsolete words and phrases. EXAMPLES: "Hence" will become "Therefore," "draw to your attention" will become "point out" and "ascertain" will become "find out."
- Whenever possible, I will phrase things positively. EXAMPLE: "She was not thinking it was relevant," becomes, "She thought it was irrelevant."
- Before I write a letter, report or a proposal I will get very clear on its purpose, or the desired results it should achieve. I will also take the time to consider my readers' expectations and preferences.
- I will refrain from using the cliché "in" phrases such as "in conclusion," and "in regard to."
- I will sprinkle periods throughout my paragraphs, creating more sentences, and allowing my readers to digest what I am saying.

- I will curb my appetite to make countless corrections when editing others' writing. H. G. Wells said that no passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's text. I will let people have their own style.

## Keys to effective interpersonal communication.

If you took a few moments and really thought about it, you could probably recall numerous times you could have smoothed over problems in communications simply by using the forms of feedback that we have discussed. Effective communication between two people is not easy. You have to practice to make it work.

### Helpful keys:

- The proper use of questioning skills.
- Using active listening.
- Sensitivity to nonverbal behavior.

**Active listening** involves "listening" to all the messages a person is sending. It means paying attention to the three sources of the person's message – the person's non-verbal behavior, the person's voice and the person's words. It also means:

- Listening for the total meaning.
- Responding to feelings.
- Noting all clues.
- Giving and getting feedback while listening.

**Aids to active listening.** In some situations, when someone is angry, upset or sad, you need to deal with the emotion before you can begin to solve the problem. This is when you use active listening to put yourself in the other person's shoes and try to understand how they feel.

## Steps you can take to prepare for a speech / presentation:

1. Plan
  - Determine your purpose.
  - Analyze your audience so that you can appeal to your listeners' interests.
  - Write down your central theme, main ideas, supporting details.
2. Organize the speech. The body is comprised of the central theme, main ideas, and supporting material.
3. Decide how the you will organize your speech
  - Topics (Topical).
  - Time (Chronological).
  - Place (Spatial).
  - Logic (Logical).
4. Select techniques for illustrating main ideas
  - Quotations.
  - Examples.
  - Analogies.
  - Statistics.
5. Draft your speech so that it includes:
  - Introduction.
  - Body.
  - Conclusion.

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