



COMMUNICATION

By Lisa Kitter

Becoming a better communicator, is the key ingredient for anyone seeking to achieve great success in business and in life. I realize that's a pretty powerful statement to make in the first paragraph of an article; however I make it with great conviction. We live in the age of communication, technology and information, all of which is available at the touch of a button. To communicate with someone halfway around the world no longer takes years, months or even days; it takes us seconds to connect with them by way of our computer and phone. What fabulous technology and what a wonderful time for all of us to sharpen our ability to get our message across quickly and effectively.

There is power in the spoken word and yet so many of us fail to improve our method of speaking with clients, friends and even family members. When you speak, do people listen? When others are speaking, do you listen? We are naturally attracted to people who are interesting to be around and who are interested in us. A great communicator is someone who is, not only an interesting person but is also the person who has a knack for being interested in what others have to say.

My new mantra for improving my communication skills is "talk less and listen more" And that is a challenge for me because I love to talk! I get paid to talk, so now I must harness my natural zest for being a "chatty Cathy" as my Aunt Mary used to refer to me when I was a child and instead give someone else, the proverbial, center stage. Listening certainly has its benefits, I learn all about the person I'm having a conversation with because, when allowed to do so, most people can and will talk all day about themselves. Life is without a doubt more interesting when I learn about someone else and their life experiences, likes, dislikes and so forth.

My clients, who are involved in sales, often complain to me that their prospects won't open up or share what their real feelings are for the products and services being offered. May I be so bold as to suggest, that when you talk less about your company and all its wondrous products and you spend more time learning about your prospects requirements, you will experience an increase in sales? It's true, talk less and you will make more money because you'll be actively involved in your prospects "hot buttons" due to your newly developed habit of listening, rather than talking. Imagine all that you've been missing by not allowing the other person to expand on their viewpoints, while you stay quiet for a moment in order for them to find the right words to say, before **you** jump in and finish their sentence for them. Habits, poor habits, such as the habit of finishing other people's sentences, are costing you big money in your business life.

Active communications includes nodding your head in acknowledgement or adding a quiet "go on" or other phrase designed to keep your talker, talking. Make eye contact when communicating face to face or when you are on the phone, take notes and repeat back what has been said from time to time. This lets your listener know that you're paying attention and focusing on their words and that you're genuinely interested in the conversation. Most human beings love to have someone pay

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attention to them and when **you** can be that someone you will find yourself with an abundance of clients and friends!

Strong relationships are created when two people share similar interest and have mutual respect for each other. When you're truly listening, you're demonstrating respect for the speaker. Your children deserve to be heard and acknowledged for their viewpoints, even when you don't agree with them. Being a good communicator doesn't mean you always have to agree with what is being said to you however it does mean that you politely allow the speaker to state their opinion without interruption from you. When their finished speaking you can and should state your viewpoints and of course, expect the same respect to be given you as you gave to them. We may have a difference of opinion but it doesn't have to create an argument when we behave as civil adults and listen to each others perspectives with mutual respect.

Becoming a better communicator takes practice and patience, mostly with yourself because what you will more than likely find is that you talk too much and listen too little. I was astonished and quite appalled to discover how many times I use the words I and me when conversing. Yuck! Me, me, me and I, I, I get really boring after a few minutes. When you pay attention to the body language of your listener, you will pick up the clues sent your way. Are they shuffling back and forth or stepping away from you? Both are signs of discomfort or a lack of interest in what is being said. When people yawn or keep looking away, as if searching for an exit route, that's your cue to stop talking or to change subjects pronto!

When we are in tune with other people and we listen to our quiet, wee voice inside each of us called our intuition; we can generally pick up on our conversation partner's energy and feelings. After conducting thousands of telephone seminars, I can sense my listener's energy so acutely that it's easy for me to know when to change subjects or repeat a statement. This has taken years of practice to master and a sincere interest in what is of interest to my listeners and not necessarily what is of interest to me. Make the topic or conversation about "them" and not about you and bingo, you win friends and admirers!

When you're a good communicator your social calendar is always full. People love to have you around in business and social events because you make others feel special and significant. Other people love your energy and find you to be one of the most interesting people they know. Your business flourishes because your customers and partners sense your sincerity and they know you listen with an open ear and an open mind.

Practice improving your communication skills and you will have a happier, more fulfilling and prosperous life!

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