

Communication Skills



Communication

Purpose

To understand that there are different ways to communicate.

To learn to get our message across clearly.

To think about the importance of listening to others.

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'Communication' for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)

Introduction

Many people think that 'communication' means talking. Although this a key element, there are actually numerous ways in which we communicate, that ie, get our message across:

- ◆ Speaking, shouting, whispering
- ◆ Tone of voice
- ◆ Listening and hearing
- ◆ Facial expressions
- ◆ Body Language
- ◆ Other forms of non verbal communication eg walking away
- ◆ How we dress and the image we portray.

Every moment of every day, we are sending messages to other people about who we are and how we are feeling.

Often, those messages can be misinterpreted by others and people may jump to wrong conclusions. That's why it's important to think carefully about communication.



Verbal Communication

Verbal Communication is about what we say (the words that we choose) and how we say it (tone, volume etc).

Words are powerful and should be used very carefully as it is impossible to 'unsay' something.

Sometimes we are thoughtless about our words and this can cause us trouble or others hurt.

Think for a moment about this old Haitian proverb:

'Don't insult the alligator until you've crossed the river.'

What could it mean? In what way is it similar to the saying 'Don't bite the hand that feeds you.'?

'A smart person knows what to say.

A wise person knows whether to say it or not.'

Anon

Handy Ways to 'Win' an Argument

It is so much better to try to persuade than to argue. Your chances of 'winning' are so much better if you can present a calm and well thought out communication rather than one that is angry or emotional.

'Raise your words, not your voice.

It is rain that helps the flowers to grow, not thunder.'

Rumi



The Eight Cs

1. **Command** attention—Choose a good time to have the conversation
2. **Clarify** the message—Be clear about your points
3. **Communicate** a benefit—Explain how would this be a good thing
4. **Consistency** counts—Keep to one request rather than making many different demands at once
5. **Cater** to the head and the heart—Say why it is both logical and positive
6. **Create** trust—Show that you keep your word; your end of the bargain
7. **Call** for action—Explain what you would really like to happen next.
8. **Choose** your words carefully—Avoid being emotive or argumentative

Be ready for disappointment. This doesn't mean that your communication has failed. You might have planted a seed that just needs a little time to develop!



The Sad Case of Derek Bentley—'Let Him Have It.'

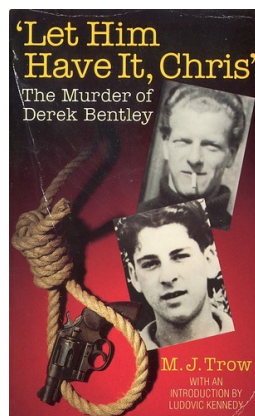
In 1952, a young man called Derek Bentley who was said to have a mental age of an eleven years old and could not read or write, was persuaded to commit a burglary with his friend , Christopher Craig. Derek carried a knife with him given to him by his friend, but Christopher Craig carried a gun.

The pair broke into a warehouse, but a local woman saw them and phoned the police who cornered the pair on the rooftop. Craig decided to try to shoot his way out of trouble and fired the gun, wounding a police officer in the shoulder.

Derek shouted 'Let him have it, Chris'. Craig continued shooting and killed a policeman. Both were caught and tried for murder. They were both found guilty. Derek was sentenced to death because he was over 18, whilst Craig was imprisoned as he was 16, even though he was the one to shoot the gun.

The case centred on the interpretation about what Derek meant by 'Let him have it.' Did he mean—let him have the bullets ie shoot him; or did he mean let him have the gun ie give themselves up?

Derek was hanged in January 1962, however his case was reviewed on many occasions after this and finally, in 1997, the Appeal Court ruled that the conviction and sentence were 'unsafe'. Sadly, far too late for Derek Bentley.



Tone

How often have you heard a teacher or a parent say:

‘Don’t speak to me in that tone of voice.’?’

The problem is often not what we say, but how we say it.

‘People may hear your words but they feel your attitude.’

John Maxwell



Listening and Hearing

We often use these two terms as if they mean the same thing, but actually there is a big difference:

- Hearing is the physical process of receiving sound
- Listening requires you to focus and understand the sounds

So you might hear a sound in the distance but you would need to listen to and interpret that sound for it to make sense.



Listen to this story

'Thomas and the Flood'

One day a very religious man called Thomas was once caught in rising floodwaters. His house was submerged under 15 feet of swirling muddy water and he could not swim but Tom had great faith so he climbed onto the roof of his house and trusted God to rescue him.

A few minutes later, a neighbour came by in a canoe and said:

"The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll paddle to safety."

"No thanks" replied Tom. "I've prayed to God and I'm sure he will save me."

A short time later the police came by in a boat.

"The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll take you to safety."

"No thanks" replied the religious man. "I've prayed to God and I'm sure he will save me."

Another hour went by and the flood was worsening. Tom heard a rescue services helicopter hovering overhead.

A voice boomed through a loud speaker:

"The waters will soon be above your house. Climb the ladder and we'll fly you to safety."

Tom heard, but did not listen



“No thanks” shouted Tom. “I’ve prayed to God and I’m sure he will save me.”

The storm raged on; the floodwaters continued to rise, until finally they reached above the roof and the Tom was drowned.

When Tom arrived at heaven he demanded an audience with God. Ushered into God’s throne room he said:

“Lord, why am I here in heaven? I prayed for you to save me, I trusted you to save me from that flood.”

“Yes you did my child and right so” replied the Lord. “Who do you think sent you a canoe, a boat and a helicopter?”

Body Language

Words and tone are not the only way in which we communicate.

Perhaps as importantly is ‘Body Language’:

- The expression on our faces
- The way we act or hold ourselves
- Telltale signs that give away how we are really feeling
- Our appearance

Often the strongest communication is not what we say, but how we act and look.

Our facial expressions often tell more about how we are feeling than the words that we say.

Look at the pictures of different people with a variety of expressions.

Without speaking aloud, decide what the attitude the person is displaying and then match it with the emoji showing the same characteristic.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



How many did you get right?

1. Happy
2. Angry
3. Thoughtful
4. Frustrated
5. Excited

‘A bad attitude is like a flat tyre....you can’t get anywhere until you change it.’

Other Aspects of Body Language

Experts tell us that there are yet more ways in which we communicate by using our bodies for example:

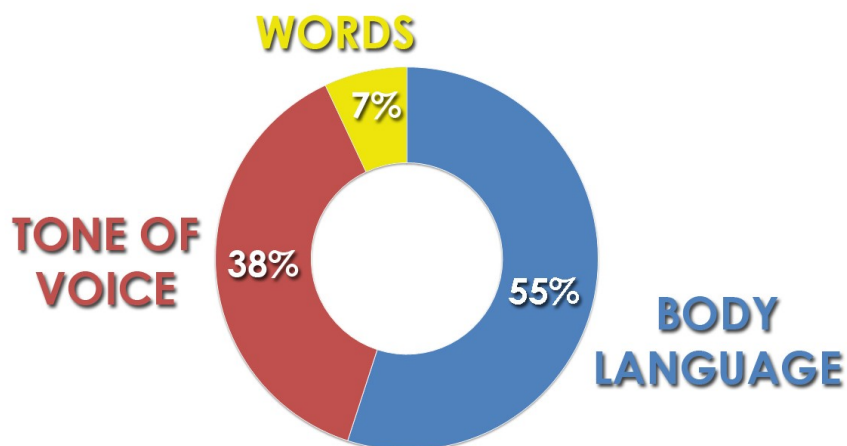


What does your body language communicate to others and how does it make them feel?



Communication Factors

What Makes Up What We Hear



Quotation

'I've learned that people will forget what you said and people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.'

Maya Angelou



The Bible Says

‘Remember this my beloved brothers and sisters! Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to become angry.’

James 1:19

‘Tell them not to speak evil of anyone, but to be peaceful and friendly and always to show a gentle attitude towards everyone.’

Titus 3:2

Let’s Pray:

God be in my head and in my understanding

God be in my eyes and in my looking

God be in my mouth and in my speaking

God be in my heart and in my thinking

God be at my end and at my departing

Amen

Putting it into Practice

Today, concentrate on talking by thinking carefully about what you say before you speak. If you have something you particularly want to discuss with a friend, teacher or someone who looks after you, plan your comments first and try to use some of the 8 Cs to be persuasive.

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of ‘Communication’ for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

Day 2

Dear God

Help me to have a good heart so that the words I speak are full of grace and love.

Amen

Today, think about HOW you say things. What tone of voice do you use? Could HOW you say something give the impression that you are annoyed, bored, rude, argumentative or reluctant.

Make a conscious effort to keep the tone of your voice positive all day.

Day 3

Dear God

Help me to listen to you in my prayers instead of doing all the talking.

Help me to recognize what it is that you are telling me.

Remind me throughout the day that nothing is going to happen that You and I cannot handle together.

Amen

Today, concentrate on listening rather than just hearing. Make an effort to try to think about what is being said and what might that person really mean, before you jump in to answer or respond.

Try to take note today of the amount that you speak versus the amount that you listen. Are they equally balanced? Which should you be doing more of?



Day 4

Dear God

Help us to get rid of pain and anger, rowing in slander and every form of unpleasantness.

Help us be kind and compassionate to one another.

And remind us to tell our faces to show this!

As Mother Teresa tells us 'Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.'

Amen

Today, be very conscious of your facial expressions. Does your face tell someone exactly what you think of them or of what they are saying in a negative way? Would your teacher know if you were enthusiastic about the lesson by the way you look.

Think about how your facial expression may send a very positive (or a very negative) message to those around you.

Day 5

Dear God

Help me not to think of the things that I didn't get after praying, but rather to think of the countless blessings that you gave me without me asking.

Amen

Finally this week, think today about the messages that your body sends. Is your stance suggesting that you don't want to be bothered with certain people? Do you slump over to do your work, suggesting that you are tired or bored? Are you sending messages that you are angry or ill—tempered and does this change how others are feeling?

