

WALL STREET JOURNAL
bestselling author

Success Factors

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Comes
With a **7-DAY**
**COMMUNICATION
CHALLENGE**

WES BERRY
keynote speaker | wordsmith

***Business
Quick
Reads***
Series Volume 12

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*Business
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Effective Communication And 7-DAY Communication Challenge

By: Wes Berry

In today's world, with smartphones, video meetings, and even virtual roundtables, we are communicating more than ever. But just because we're communicating so much, doesn't mean we're doing it effectively. There's a time and place for everything, and that includes words. What you say, how you say it, and when you say it can make or

break a business deal or a relationship. Knowing how to communicate effectively can help stop problems before they occur and even draw people in.

People are all different, as you've noticed if you've ever sat in any type of meeting. Some have a lot to say but are too introverted to say it. Others don't have much to say, but never seem to stop talking. And good communication doesn't just come naturally to most of us. We have to work at it, learn from our mistakes, and continually try to improve.

We've all heard how the art of good communication involves listening. But what about watching? Sometimes, the most important part of communication is hearing what isn't being said. It's reading the body language and knowing when there is a problem. It's reacting with a gentle gesture or

smile to calm the waters before they get stirred too much.

*Good communication
doesn't just come
naturally for most
of us.*

So how do

you learn that? Let's take a look at some of the most effective ways to communicate and see how they apply to business. Here are how some of the top communicators communicate.

USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE

Clear and concise communication is critical in any form of interaction, whether it's in personal or professional settings. When communicating with others, it's important to use language that is easy to understand and appropriate for the audience's education level, culture, and background.

This means avoiding complicated words or phrases that may confuse your audience. Instead,

it's best to use simple, everyday language that anyone can understand. This is especially important when communicating with a diverse audience that may have different levels of education, culture, and background. It is especially true for public figures who are regularly communicating with a diverse audience.

Using simple language is a skill that can be developed over time. It requires thinking carefully about the words you use and how they may be interpreted by others. It also requires a deep understanding of the audience you are communicating with and the context of the communication.

Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey is a popular media personality who is known for her ability to communicate effectively with a diverse audience.

Her success is due in part to her use of simple language that is easy for anyone to understand. Oprah's communication style is characterized by her ability to connect with her audience on a personal level, using language that is relatable and easy to understand.

One of the keys to Oprah's success is her ability to listen carefully to her audience and respond in a way that is meaningful to them. This requires a deep understanding of the audience she is communicating with and the issues that are important to them. Oprah's ability to communicate in a clear and concise manner has helped her to build a loyal following and establish herself as a trusted voice in the media industry. By taking the time to understand your audience and tailoring your communication style to meet their needs, you can become a more effective communicator and build stronger relationships with those around you.¹

ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS

Effective communication involves more than just using simple language. It also requires organizing your thoughts into a logical sequence that is easy for your audience to follow. This means planning your message before communicating it and structuring it in a way that makes sense to your audience. Have you ever read an email that was sent out quickly about a meeting or product issue and you can tell the writer didn't take the time to properly formulate their thoughts? It leaves everyone in the email chain confused.

One effective way to organize your thoughts is to use an outline or a mind map to map out your thoughts before you begin communicating. First, consider the needs of your audience. This means structuring your message in a way that is relevant to them and easy for them to

understand. “Know your audience” as they say. Who are you writing to? You should also consider the context of the communication, including the purpose of the communication and the medium you are using to communicate. For example, it’s often easy to have the tone of your message misconstrued in emails or texts, because people can’t hear the pitch of your voice or see your body language. A quick message could be construed as an angry message.

Barack Obama

Barack Obama is a well-known political figure who can communicate effectively with a diverse audience. One of the keys to Obama's success is his ability to organize his thoughts into a logical sequence that is easy for his audience to follow.

During his time as President of the United States, Obama was known for his powerful speeches that were carefully crafted to inspire and motivate his audience. One of the ways that Obama achieved this was by using a clear and logical structure in his speeches. He would typically start with a strong opening that grabbed his audience's attention, followed by a clear and concise statement of his main message. He would then provide evidence to support his message, often using personal anecdotes to make his point more relatable to his audience. Finally, he would end his speeches with a “call to action” that encouraged his audience to move on the issue at hand.

Organizing your thoughts is a critical part of effective communication. By planning your message before communicating it and structuring it in a way that makes sense to your audience, you can increase the effectiveness of your communication

and build stronger relationships with those around you. By following Obama's example and taking the time to plan your message before communicating it, you can become a more effective communicator and achieve greater success in your personal and professional relationships.²

USE BREVITY

In addition to using simple language and organizing your thoughts, being brief is another important aspect of effective communication. When you keep your message short and to the point, you increase the likelihood that your audience will understand and remember what you're saying. This means avoiding rambling or going off on tangents that can confuse your audience. Instead, you should focus on your main message and convey it as clearly and concisely as possible.

One effective way to be brief is to use the "rule of three." This rule suggests that you should aim to convey your message in three main points. This helps to keep your message focused and makes it easier for your audience to remember.

Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs was a well-known entrepreneur and technology innovator who could communicate effectively with his audience. One of the keys to Jobs' success was his ability to be brief and to the point.

During his presentations, Jobs would typically use the "rule of three" to convey his main message. He would introduce a product or idea, highlight three key features or benefits, and then conclude with a call to action. Jobs' presentations were known for their simplicity and clarity, and

they were often praised for their ability to engage and motivate his audience.

In addition to using the "rule of three," Jobs was also known for his use of storytelling to make his messages more relatable and memorable. He would often use personal anecdotes or real-world examples to illustrate his points and connect with his audience on a deeper level. Storytelling, used well, is a powerful tool in communicating. It puts the audience first, and often brings empathy and a relational aspect into the communication.³

LISTEN ACTIVELY, LISTEN CLOSELY

When we listen actively, we show the speaker that we value their words and opinions, and we are better able to understand their point of view. When we listen to someone, it's important to give them our full attention. This means focusing on what they are saying and avoiding being distracted

by other things, such as our phones or other people around us. When we pay attention, we are better able to understand the speaker's perspective and respond appropriately.

One way to show that you are paying attention is to use active listening techniques. These techniques include asking clarifying questions, summarizing what the speaker has said, and providing feedback to show that you understand their point of view.

Warren Buffett

Warren Buffett is a well-known billionaire investor and philanthropist who is often praised for his ability to listen actively and engage with people at all levels.

One of the ways that Buffett demonstrates his active listening skills is by asking thoughtful questions. He takes the time to understand the

person's perspective and ask questions that help him gain deeper insights into their thoughts and motivations. By doing so, he shows that he values their opinions and is interested in what they have to say.

Another way that Buffett demonstrates his active listening skills is by using his body language. He maintains eye contact with the speaker, nods his head to show that he is following along, and leans in slightly to show that he is fully engaged in the conversation. This helps to create a positive and supportive environment where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Buffett's active listening skills have helped him to build strong relationships with his business partners, employees, and investors. By listening actively, he has gained a deeper understanding of the people he works with and has been able to make more informed decisions as a result.

Active listening is a critical skill for effective communication. When we pay attention and use active listening techniques, we show that we value the speaker's perspective and are better

When we pay attention and use active listening techniques, we show that we value the speaker's perspective.

able to understand their point of view. Warren Buffett's active listening skills are a great example of

how listening can lead to success in business and beyond.⁴

ASK QUESTIONS

Effective communication is a two-way process that involves both speaking and listening. Active listening which we discussed above, can further be improved by asking questions and paraphrasing what you have heard.

Asking Clarifying Questions

Clarifying questions help you to understand the speaker's perspective ensure that you are on the same page. It's essential to ask open-ended questions that allow the speaker to elaborate on their message and provide more details. Clarifying questions can help you to understand the speaker's tone, intentions, and expectations.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is an active listening technique that involves restating the speaker's message in your own words. This technique can help you to confirm your understanding of the message and ensure that you and the speaker are on the same page. Paraphrasing can also help the speaker to feel heard and understood, which can lead to better communication. This technique is

used a lot in marriage classes, where you repeat back to your spouse what you just heard them say to show that you heard and understood. It's also a very effective tool for business, as Bill Gates has shown.

Bill Gates

Bill Gates is a well-known American entrepreneur, philanthropist, and co-founder of Microsoft Corporation. Gates is also known for his excellent communication skills, particularly his ability to ask insightful questions. Gates is a master at asking questions that provoke thought and encourage deeper reflection.

One of the ways that Gates demonstrates his questioning skills is by asking open-ended questions. He asks questions that encourage people to think deeply and provide more information about their perspective. By asking open-ended questions,

Gates shows that he is genuinely interested in understanding the speaker's point of view.

Another way that Gates demonstrates his questioning skills is by asking follow-up questions. These questions build on the speaker's previous answers and encourage them to explore their thoughts in more detail. This technique helps to keep the conversation flowing and can lead to a more in-depth understanding of the speaker's perspective. By asking thoughtful questions, Gates has been able to gain a deeper understanding of the people he works with and build stronger relationships with them.⁵

SHOW INTEREST

Showing Interest in a conversation is critical to effective communication. It involves being present in the moment, engaging in the discussion, and demonstrating a willingness to

learn from the other person. It helps in building trust, respect, and understanding between the participants of the conversation. It makes the other person feel heard.

One way to show interest in a conversation is through nonverbal cues. Nonverbal cues, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body language, communicate a lot about a person's engagement in the conversation. They indicate that the person is listening and actively participating in the discussion.

Another way to show interest is by asking questions, like those we discussed above. Asking questions not only shows that the person is engaged in the conversation, but it also helps in clarifying any doubts and understanding the other person's perspective. It demonstrates a willingness to learn and a desire to understand the other person's point of view.

Sheryl Sandberg

Sheryl Sandberg is a well-known business executive, author, and philanthropist. She is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Facebook and the founder of LeanIn.Org, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering women to achieve their ambitions. She is an excellent communicator and an active listener.

Sandberg shows interest in the conversation by actively engaging with the other person. She listens attentively and asks questions to clarify any doubts and better understand the other person's perspective. She often paraphrases what the other person said to ensure that she has understood the message correctly.

Sandberg also uses nonverbal cues to demonstrate her interest in the conversation. She maintains eye contact, nods her head, and leans in

slightly to show that she is engaged in the discussion. She also uses hand gestures to communicate her point effectively. Sandberg's ability to show interest in the conversation has helped her to build strong relationships with her colleagues, employees, and business partners. She is known for her collaborative leadership style, and her ability to communicate effectively has played a significant role in her success.⁶

USE NONVERBAL CUES

Nonverbal cues are an essential part of communication. They can convey a wide range of emotions and attitudes that words alone cannot express.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is one of the most crucial nonverbal cues in communication. When we make

eye contact with someone, we show them that we are present and engaged in the conversation. Eye contact also helps to establish trust and build rapport, as it signals to the other person that we are interested in what they have to say.

In addition, eye contact can help to convey our emotions and attitudes towards the other person. For example, direct eye contact can show confidence, while avoiding eye contact can indicate shyness or insecurity.

Tim Cook

Tim Cook is the current CEO of Apple Inc. and is known for his excellent communication skills. Cook has a reputation for being an attentive listener and for making an effort to understand the perspective of the person he is communicating with.

Cook's use of nonverbal cues, such as maintaining eye contact, using open body language, and displaying appropriate facial expressions, has been noted by those who have worked with him. By doing so, Cook shows that he is engaged in the conversation and interested in what the other person has to say.

In addition, Cook's ability to be empathetic has been praised by many. He has a reputation for being understanding and respectful of his employees' opinions and concerns, which has helped him build strong relationships with them. Cook often listens to feedback and is open to constructive criticism, which has helped him to continuously improve his communication skills.

One example of Cook's use of empathy occurred in 2015 when he publicly came out as gay. Cook's announcement was met with an outpouring of support from the public, but he also received

criticism from some who believed that he should have kept his personal life private. However, Cook responded to the criticism with empathy and respect, stating that he understood that not everyone would agree with his decision, but that he hoped his announcement would help others who were struggling with their own identity.

Cook's ability to be open-minded has also been noted by those who have worked with him. He is known for being receptive to new ideas and for encouraging his employees to speak up and share their thoughts. Cook has also demonstrated a willingness to admit when he is wrong and to learn from his mistakes.

Tim Cook is an excellent example of someone who uses effective communication skills in his leadership role at Apple. By using nonverbal cues, showing empathy, and being open-minded, Cook has built strong relationships with his

employees and has created a culture of open communication at Apple.

Elon Musk

Elon Musk is a well-known entrepreneur and business magnate who is known for his innovative ideas and bold leadership style. He is also an excellent communicator who effectively uses eye contact to connect with his audience.

In his public speaking engagements, Musk makes direct eye contact with his audience. He maintains eye contact for several seconds at a time, which helps to establish a connection with the audience and shows that he is fully engaged in the conversation.

Musk's eye contact also conveys his confidence and passion for his work. He uses eye contact to convey his enthusiasm for his ideas and to inspire his audience to share his vision.

During interviews, Musk makes eye contact with the interviewer, which helps to establish a connection and build rapport. This connection can help to create a more relaxed and open environment, which can lead to a more fruitful conversation. By making direct eye contact, he also conveys his confidence and passion for his work. This powerful tool has allowed him to achieve much success.⁷

USE BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is an essential aspect of communication that is often overlooked. The way we carry ourselves, our facial expressions, and our gestures can convey just as much information as the words we speak.

Open body language is a powerful tool that can help to establish trust and build connections with others. It involves maintaining an open

posture, avoiding crossing your arms or legs, and facing the person you are communicating with directly. By doing so, you convey that you are approachable and friendly, and that you are fully engaged in the conversation.

Open body language is a powerful tool.

One way to use open body language effectively is to mirror the other person's body language. This involves subtly imitating their posture and gestures to establish a sense of rapport and connection. Mirroring can help to create a positive and comfortable environment where people feel more at ease.

Melinda Gates

Melinda Gates is a well-known philanthropist and advocate for women's rights. She

is also an excellent communicator who uses open body language to connect with others.

One of the ways that Gates demonstrates open body language is by maintaining an open posture. She avoids crossing her arms or legs, and she faces the person she is communicating with directly. This conveys that she is approachable and interested in the conversation.

Another way that Gates uses open body language is by mirroring the other person's body language. She subtly imitates their gestures and posture to establish a sense of rapport and connection. This helps to create a positive and supportive environment where people feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Her use of open body language has helped her to build strong relationships with her colleagues and collaborators. By conveying that she is approachable and friendly, she has established a

sense of trust and respect that has led to many successful partnerships and initiatives.⁸

USE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Our facial expressions can convey a range of emotions and can be used to show interest and engagement in a conversation. They are another powerful tool for communication. When we use facial expressions, we can convey emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and surprise. Facial expressions can also be used to show interest and engagement in a conversation.

One way to use facial expressions effectively is to smile. A smile can convey warmth and friendliness and can help to put the other person at ease. Smiling can also be used to show that you are happy or pleased with what the other person is saying.

Another way to use facial expressions effectively is to maintain eye contact. Eye contact can help to establish a connection with the other person and can show that you are interested in what they have to say. By maintaining eye contact, you can also convey emotions such as trust, respect, and sincerity.

Jeff Bezos

Jeff Bezos is a well-known entrepreneur and the founder of Amazon. He is also known for his effective communication skills, including his use of facial expressions. Bezos is skilled in using his facial expressions to convey a range of emotions, including happiness, excitement, and determination.

Bezos is often seen smiling in interviews and public appearances, which helps to convey his warmth and friendliness. His smile also helps to put

others at ease and create a positive and supportive environment.

Another way that Bezos uses facial expressions is by maintaining eye contact. He is known for his intense gaze, which can convey emotions such as determination and focus. By maintaining eye contact, he is able to establish a connection with the other person and convey his sincerity and interest in the conversation.⁹

BE EMPATHETIC

Empathy is a critical skill for effective communication. When we understand the other person's perspective and show that we care about their feelings, we are better able to build strong relationships and make a positive impact in their lives. It's important to try to see the situation from the other person's point of view, especially if you disagree. This means putting ourselves in their

shoes and trying to understand how they feel and what they are going through. When we do this, we are better able to communicate in a way that is supportive and understanding.

Dolly Parton

Dolly Parton is a popular country music singer, songwriter, and actress who is also known for her philanthropy work. She is an excellent example of empathy in action.

One of the ways that Parton demonstrates her empathy is through her Imagination Library program, which provides free books to children from birth to age five. The program started in her hometown in Tennessee and has since expanded to communities across the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Parton's goal is to encourage children to read and help them develop a love of learning.

Parton's empathy is also evident in her songwriting. She often writes songs that reflect the struggles and challenges that people face in their everyday lives. Her music is relatable and speaks to people from all walks of life. For example, her song "Coat of Many Colors" tells the story of growing up poor in rural Appalachia and the value of family and love.

In addition, Parton has been involved in numerous charitable organizations, including the American Red Cross, the Dollywood Foundation, and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. She has donated millions of dollars to support education, disaster relief, and other causes.

Dolly Parton's empathy has helped her connect with people from all backgrounds and make a positive impact in their lives. By understanding the struggles that people face and

providing support and resources, she has helped to make the world a better place.

Using Empathy Statements

Empathy statements are powerful tools that can help you connect with others and show that you care about their experiences. An empathy statement acknowledges the other person's feelings and experiences and shows that you are listening and understanding.

For example, if someone is sharing a difficult experience with you, you might say, "I can imagine that must have been really tough for you," or, "It sounds like you've been through a lot. I'm here for you." These statements convey empathy and compassion, and they can help the other person feel seen and heard.

Avoiding Judgment

Avoiding judgment is another critical aspect of empathy. When we judge others or make assumptions about their experiences, we close ourselves off to their perspectives and limit our ability to connect with them.

For example, if someone shares a political opinion that is different from yours, you might be tempted to judge them or dismiss their perspective. However, if you approach the conversation with an open mind and seek to understand their point of view, you may find common ground and deepen your understanding of the issues.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She was born in 1997 in Mingora, Pakistan, where she attended school until the

Taliban took control of the region. The Taliban banned girls from attending school, but Malala continued to attend in secret and became an advocate for girls' education. In 2012, Malala was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman while riding the bus home from school. After recovering from her injuries, Malala continued her advocacy work and founded the Malala Fund to support girls' education.

Malala's story is one of incredible resilience and courage. In her speeches and interviews, she often talks about the importance of empathy and understanding in creating a more just and peaceful world. For example, in a speech at the United Nations in 2013, Malala said, "Let us pick up our books and our pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first."

Malala's message is one of compassion and understanding. She believes that by seeing the world through the eyes of others and understanding their experiences, we can create a more just and equitable society. Malala Yousafzai's story is a powerful reminder of the importance of empathy in creating positive change in the world.¹⁰

BE OPEN-MINDED AND WILLING TO LEARN

Being open-minded is an essential trait for effective communication. It involves the ability to listen to others' opinions, consider their ideas, and learn from them. Open-minded people are willing to admit when they are wrong and are open to new perspectives and ideas.

One of the keys to being open-minded is avoiding the tendency to jump to conclusions. It is easy to assume that we know what someone else is

thinking or feeling, but assumptions can often be incorrect. By avoiding assumptions, we can remain open to different opinions and perspectives.

Another essential aspect of being open-minded is listening to feedback. Feedback can be hard to hear, but it is essential for growth and

Open-minded people are willing to admit when they are wrong and are open to new perspectives and ideas.

development.

When we listen to feedback, we are showing that we are open to learning and improving our communication skills. Additionally, feedback helps us see things from another person's perspective, which can broaden our understanding of different viewpoints.

Lastly, being open-minded involves being willing to learn. It is essential to acknowledge that we don't know everything and that there is always room for growth and improvement. Being open to

new ideas and perspectives can help us expand our knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of others.

Satya Nadella

Satya Nadella is the CEO of Microsoft, a position he has held since 2014. He is known for his open-minded approach to leadership, which has helped transform the company's culture and business strategy. He is an active listener, and willing to pay attention to what his employees are saying.

When Nadella took over as CEO, Microsoft was struggling to keep up with its competitors. Nadella recognized that the company needed to change its focus to stay relevant. He encouraged employees to think creatively and experiment with new ideas. Nadella created an open-minded culture

at Microsoft, where everyone's ideas were valued, regardless of their position in the company.

Nadella's approach has been instrumental in Microsoft's success. Under his leadership, the company has shifted its focus to cloud computing and artificial intelligence, which has resulted in significant growth and profitability. Nadella's open-minded approach has allowed Microsoft to be innovative and adapt to changing market conditions, leading them to great success in a competitive industry.

Feedback

Asking for feedback is an essential component of effective communication. It allows the sender to confirm that their message has been received and understood correctly. Feedback also provides an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings, clarify any confusion, and

address any issues or concerns that may arise. In a business setting, feedback from clients, customers, and colleagues can help to improve communication skills and make necessary adjustments to meet their needs. In a personal relationship, feedback from your partner or family members can help you understand their perspective and improve your communication skills.

Furthermore, feedback is vital for building trust and rapport with the other person. When you seek feedback, you are showing the other person that you value their opinion, and you are open to making changes to improve your communication skills. This can lead to a more productive and positive relationship in both personal and professional settings.

Constructive criticism is also a valuable tool for improving communication skills. Being open to constructive criticism can help you identify areas

where you need to improve and develop your skills. When receiving constructive criticism, it is important to listen actively, remain open-minded, and avoid becoming defensive. Constructive criticism is not intended to attack you personally but to provide feedback that will help you improve.

For example, if you receive feedback that your message was unclear or confusing, you can use the feedback to adjust your communication style, such as simplifying your language or using more examples to make your message more understandable. By implementing these changes, you are more likely to achieve the desired outcome and build better relationships with those you communicate with. We writers often receive constructive criticism from our editors, which makes our books better!

Angela Ahrendts

Let's take the example of Angela Ahrendts, the former Senior Vice President of Retail at Apple Inc. Ahrendts is a great example of a leader who embraced feedback to enhance her communication skills.

During her tenure at Apple, Ahrendts made it a point to meet with Apple store employees around the world and solicit their feedback on how Apple could improve its retail experience. She recognized that these employees were the ones who interacted with customers the most and therefore had valuable insights into customer needs and preferences.

Ahrendts not only listened to the feedback but also implemented many of the suggestions. For example, she changed the dress code for employees to make it more inclusive, added more seating areas

in stores, and introduced more interactive features to the stores.

By actively seeking feedback and using it to improve the customer experience, Ahrendts was able to enhance her communication skills and strengthen her relationship with employees. She showed that being open to feedback and willing to make changes based on it can lead to great results.

Michelle Obama

A well-known person who used feedback to improve their communication skills is Michelle Obama, the former First Lady of the United States. In her book, *Becoming*, Michelle Obama discusses the importance of feedback in her personal and professional life. She regularly seeks feedback from her husband, Barack Obama, and her close friends and colleagues.

Michelle Obama emphasizes the importance of actively listening to feedback and using it to make improvements. For example, she received feedback that her speeches were too formal and scripted, which she used to adjust her communication style to become more natural and authentic. As a result, Michelle Obama's speeches became more impactful, and she was able to connect better with her audience.

Leaders like Angela Ahrendts and Michelle Obama have shown that seeking feedback from others and being open to constructive criticism can help improve communication skills and lead to better outcomes. As individuals, we should strive to be open to feedback, ask for it, and use it to improve our communication skills.¹¹

BE RESPECTFUL

Effective communication is not just about conveying information accurately and effectively. It is also about showing respect for the person you are communicating with. Respectful communication is essential for building trust, developing positive relationships, and avoiding conflicts.

Showing respect for others involves using polite language, treating others with kindness and dignity, and being mindful of their feelings and perspectives. It is important to remember that communication is a two-way process, and both the sender and the receiver should be respectful towards each other.

In a professional setting, showing respect towards colleagues, customers, and clients is critical to building a positive and productive workplace culture. This can include using proper

titles, addressing people by their preferred names, and avoiding derogatory language or behavior.

In a personal setting, showing respect towards friends, family members, and loved ones can help to strengthen relationships and build trust. This can include listening actively, being supportive, and avoiding behaviors that may be hurtful or disrespectful.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Well-known for her respectful communication style is Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an American lawyer and jurist who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1993 until her death in 2020. Justice Ginsburg was known for her professionalism, her commitment to equal rights, and her respectful communication style.

Throughout her career, Justice Ginsburg demonstrated her commitment to respectful communication in various ways. For example, she was known for her polite and respectful demeanor during court proceedings, even when disagreements arose. She was also committed to listening carefully to the perspectives of others and approaching disagreements with an open mind and a willingness to find common ground.

In addition to her professional conduct, Justice Ginsburg's personal life was also marked by respectful communication. She was married to her husband, Martin, for over 50 years, and the couple was known for their close and loving relationship. Justice Ginsburg was also known for her kindness and compassion towards others, including her colleagues and those who worked with her.

Respectful communication involves using polite language, treating others with dignity and

kindness, and being mindful of their feelings and perspectives. Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an excellent example of someone who demonstrated respectful communication throughout her life, both in her professional and personal relationships. By following her example, we can all improve our communication skills and build positive and productive relationships.¹²

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

Effective communication is being mindful of our language and behavior towards others and avoiding anything that could be perceived as

disrespectful or
offensive. It is
important to
understand that

*Respectful
communication is not
just about what we
say, but how we say it.*

respectful communication is not just about what we say, but how we say it.

Serena Williams

A person who embodies the principles of respectful communication is tennis legend, Serena Williams. Williams is known for her passion, athleticism, and competitiveness on the court. However, off the court, she is equally known for her graciousness, humility, and respect for others.

Williams has always been conscious of her language and behavior towards others, whether it is her fans, her competitors, or her colleagues. She has consistently demonstrated a commitment to respectful communication by avoiding language that could be perceived as offensive or disrespectful, even in the heat of the moment.

For example, in the 2018 US Open final, Williams was penalized for multiple code violations during her match against Naomi Osaka. Despite her frustration and disappointment, Williams showed grace and respect towards her

opponent and the officials, despite disagreeing with their decisions.

In her interviews and public appearances, Williams is also known for her humble and respectful demeanor. She often speaks about the importance of hard work, perseverance, and treating others with kindness and respect.

Serena Williams is an excellent example of how respectful communication can help build and maintain positive relationships, both personal and professional. By being mindful of our language and behavior towards others, we can create a more harmonious and respectful world.¹³

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In today's globalized world, it is essential to be mindful of cultural differences and avoid making assumptions or stereotypes about the other person's culture or background.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas

An individual who exemplifies this principle is the actor and producer, Priyanka Chopra Jonas. Chopra Jonas is a global icon, having made a name for herself in both Hollywood and Bollywood. She is also known for her commitment to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the entertainment industry.

Chopra Jonas has always been conscious of her language and behavior towards others, particularly when it comes to cultural differences. She has often spoken about the importance of embracing diversity and avoiding stereotypes and assumptions.

In one interview, Chopra Jonas talked about the challenges she faced as a young actress in Bollywood, where she was often stereotyped as a "dumb blonde" because of her fair complexion. She

spoke about how she had to work hard to prove herself and break down stereotypes about her background and ethnicity.

In her work as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Chopra Jonas has also been committed to promoting education and empowering young girls around the world. She has been vocal about the need to address cultural biases and promote gender equality, particularly in developing countries.

Chopra Jonas's commitment to respectful communication and cultural awareness has earned her respect and admiration from fans around the world. She is a role model for anyone looking to build positive relationships and promote inclusivity in their personal and professional lives. She is an excellent example of how cultural awareness and respectful communication can help build bridges between people from different backgrounds and

promote diversity and inclusivity. By being mindful of our language and behavior towards others, we can create a more harmonious and respectful world.¹⁴

FOLLOW UP

Effective communication doesn't end when the conversation is over. Following up is an essential step to ensure that the message is received, understood, and acted upon. Here are a few tips on how to do that.

Recap the Conversation

Recapping the conversation is the first step in follow-up. It is an opportunity to review the discussion and make sure that both parties have a clear understanding of the message. Recapitulation is crucial because it helps to reinforce the message

and clarify any misunderstandings that might have arisen during the conversation.

In a study by psychologists Elizabeth Newton and Daniel Oppenheimer, participants were divided into two groups: "tappers" and "listeners." The tappers were asked to tap out the rhythm of a well-known song, while the listeners had to guess the song. The tappers believed that the listeners would guess the song 50% of the time, but in reality, the listeners guessed correctly only 2.5% of the time. The study concluded that the tappers suffered from "the curse of knowledge," which is the difficulty of imagining what it's like not to know something that they already know.

The curse of knowledge is a common communication barrier. Recapitulation is an effective tool to overcome this barrier by ensuring that both parties have the same level of understanding.

Take Action

The second step in follow-up is taking action. It is essential to take action on any issues or concerns that were discussed during the conversation. Failing to act can lead to frustration, resentment, and a breakdown in trust. It is important to note that taking action doesn't necessarily mean resolving the issue immediately. It can also mean taking the necessary steps to address the issue and providing updates on the progress.

Steven R. Covey

A famous example of the importance of taking action comes from the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey. Covey tells the story of a man who complains to him about his son's behavior. The man feels that he has tried everything to change his son's behavior

but nothing has worked. Covey asks the man if he has ever tried simply *listening* to his son. The man realizes that he hasn't and tries it. The result is a complete change in his son's behavior. Covey concludes that "most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Following up Again

The third step in follow-up is following up again. It is important to ensure that the issue has been resolved and that both parties are satisfied with the outcome. Following up again can also help to reinforce the message and build trust between both parties.

Importance of following up again comes from a study by Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck. Dweck found that praising children's intelligence, rather than their effort, can lead to a

fixed mindset, which is the belief that intelligence is a fixed trait that cannot be improved.

In contrast, praising children's effort can lead to a growth

*Effective
communication
doesn't end when
the conversation is
over.*

mindset, which is the belief that intelligence can be improved through hard work and perseverance. Dweck found that when teachers followed up on their students' efforts, it led to an increase in their academic performance.

Effective communication doesn't end when the conversation is over. Follow-up is an essential step to ensure that the message is received, understood, and acted upon. Recapping, taking action, and following up again are three critical steps in effective follow-up. They help to reinforce the message, build trust, and improve outcomes. By incorporating these steps into your communication

strategy, you can improve your communication skills and achieve better results.¹⁵

Conclusion

Communication is something we all have to do, whether at home, in the office, or in the grocery store. How you do it will often make or break the results you are seeking, and will overall effect the quality of your life, the peace you have, and the success that follows. Words are powerful. When you learn to use them well, you can do great things.

7-Day Communication Challenge

Why Accept this Challenge?

If you're seeking personal growth and development, you need to commit to consistent effort. One way to jumpstart this journey is by taking the 7-Day Challenge. To succeed in this challenge, you must dedicate a little time each day to contemplation and reflection on the given topic.

The questions provided are only a starting point. If they don't resonate with your personal experiences, modify them to better suit your

situation. This flexibility allows for a more meaningful and authentic exploration of the subject matter.

When you commit to this challenge, you're making a decision to actively engage with your thoughts and emotions. Writing down your reflections is a powerful tool to solidify your insights and gain clarity on your internal landscape. This daily practice can have a profound impact on your overall well-being.

Approach this 7-Day Challenge with an open mind and willingness to explore. You may uncover aspects of yourself that you weren't previously aware of or gain a deeper understanding of your values and priorities. This challenge's benefits extend beyond the initial 7 days, and the act of carving out time for introspection and self-reflection can become a habit.

Ultimately, this challenge is a powerful tool for anyone seeking to enhance their self-awareness and personal growth. By dedicating a small amount of time each day to contemplation and reflection, you are taking an important step towards a more fulfilling and meaningful life. Upon completion, commit to re-reading and updating this challenge when you find yourself challenged by this concept in the future.

A 7-day Challenge provides a roadmap for achieving your goals by breaking them down into smaller, achievable tasks. By having a clear challenge, you can stay motivated and focused on your goals. Each day's challenge builds upon the previous day's, creating momentum towards the desired outcome. Additionally, having a plan can help you stay organized and prioritize tasks based on their importance and urgency.

A challenge can help you overcome procrastination and stay accountable. By having a clear outline of what needs to be done, you can avoid feeling overwhelmed and take action towards your goals. Furthermore, having a plan can help you track your progress and make adjustments as needed.

Overall, a 7-day Challenge is a powerful tool to focus on a particular issue and provide greater insight, bringing an area of concern into your comfort zone.

Day 1 - Monday: Use Simple Language

Challenge yourself to use simple language when communicating with others. Choose a person or group of people you interact with regularly and make a conscious effort to use language that is easy to understand and appropriate for their education level, culture, and background.

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Day 2 - Tuesday: Listen Closely

Practice active listening today. Choose a conversation or meeting you will be a part of and focus on listening to the speaker. Show that you value their words and opinions by asking questions and repeating back what you heard to ensure that you understand their point of view.

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Day 3 - Wednesday: Use Nonverbal Cues - Eye Contact

Today, make a conscious effort to use eye contact when communicating with others. Whether it's in a meeting or a casual conversation, maintain eye contact with the person you are speaking with to show that you are engaged and interested in what they have to say.

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Day 4 - Thursday: Use Nonverbal Cues - Facial Expressions

Today, focus on using facial expressions to convey your emotions and engage in the conversation. Practice being empathetic by trying to understand the other person's point of view and responding with appropriate facial expressions.

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Day 5 - Friday: Be Open-Minded and Willing to Learn

Today, challenge yourself to be open-minded and willing to learn from others. Listen to their opinions and ideas and consider how they can be incorporated into your own perspective. Practice admitting when you are wrong and being open to new perspectives and ideas.

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Day 6 - Saturday: Be Respectful

Practice showing respect towards others today. Choose a conversation or interaction and make a conscious effort to use polite language, treat others with kindness and dignity, and be mindful of their feelings and perspectives. Remember that communication is a two-way process, and both parties should show respect towards each other.

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Day 7 - Sunday: Day of Contemplation

Take some time today to reflect on your communication skills and the progress you've made this week. Think about the areas where you excelled and areas that still need improvement. Use this day of contemplation to plan out how you will continue to improve your communication skills going forward.

NOTES _____

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