

# Workplace Communication: Strategies for Effective Verbal Communication in the Workplace

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## **Respectful Communication**

Respect/Equality

Confirmation

- recognition
- acceptance
- engagement (agree or disagree; involvement)
- dialogue vs. monologue (talking with vs. talking at)
- verbal and nonverbal validation

Listening

Choice

Finding Blame vs. Taking Responsibility

Appropriate Boundaries

## **"Smart" Conflict Strategies**

### **Levels of Meaning**

content and relationship levels of meaning (self-esteem/power)

### **Truths about conflict**

(based on Notarius and Markman)

1. Each relationship contains a hidden reservoir of hope
2. One zinger can erase twenty acts of kindness

3. Little changes in you can lead to huge changes in the relationship

4. Conflict is influenced by Spirals and Arousal

### **Preparing**

- Pick your battles carefully
- Be sensitive to timing
- Nip it in the Bud
- Check your motivation
- Check your expectations
- Identify trigger points
- Make a plan

### **Beginning**

- Change your environment
- Start with gentleness and understanding
- Calm down--breath slowly with focus; stretch muscles; go for a walk or run

### **Handling**

- Describe, don't blame--I messages
- Be specific, concrete
- Listen to understand
- Ride out the storms--ride emotions like the tide; focus on the relationship
- Stay focused
- Pay attention to body language
- Validate your partner--recognize her, affirm him
- Take responsibility
- Be polite (no interrupting)

### **Finishing**

- Summarize
- Affirm the person
- Affirm the relationship
- Follow-up

# Gibb's Defensive and Supportive Communication

## **Evaluation (defensive)**

"You simply must be more responsible."

## **Control (defensive)**

"You need to have this fixed...soon!"

## **Strategy (defensive)**

"It's important that we all work hard, isn't it?"  
"Certainly."  
"And you know the phones have to be answered, don't you?"  
"Well, of course."  
"Then, you'd better do your part in answering them."

## **Neutrality (defensive)**

"Do whatever you want."

## **Superiority (defensive)**

"That's not the way we've done things here. Wait until you've been around this campus for awhile, you'll see."

## **Certainty (defensive)**

"You can waste your energy if you want to, but I know this is the only way to get this done on time."

## **Description (supportive)**

"When you don't inform the rest of us of a situation you've encountered, it puts all of us at a disadvantage."

## **Problem Orientation (supportive)**

"Can we work together to find a solution?"

## **Spontaneity (supportive)**

"I know you don't like answering the phones, but at times we're all busy. What are some ideas on how to manage this?"

## **Empathy (supportive)**

"Why don't you tell me what you've been struggling with and I'll help you thing through things."

## **Equality (supportive)**

"We've tried a variety of procedures before and this is the only one that seems to work. What are your ideas?"

## **Provisionalism (supportive)**

"I'm pretty certain this is the only way to get things done, but I'd like to hear your perspective."