

How to Improve Communication Skills

How to Improve Communication Skills

By Peter Murphy - 2007-02-21

Here are six tips for improving your communication style:

1. Knowing how to improve communication skills will come easier once you become aware of your own communication style. Each person has a unique way of communicating. Listen to your own speech. What sorts of words do you use? Which sort of body language and what tone of voice are you using? Now, think of someone who, in your opinion, is a good communicator. Compare your style to theirs. You've just taken an important first step in how to improve communication skills.
2. Now that you are aware of your own style, study the style of those around you. How do the most important people in your life converse? How do they say things? Look for approaches you can model and make your own.
3. Adjust to the other styles of communication. Don't think it is too late to change your way of conversing because it's been years. You had to learn to communicate in the first place and you can unlearn certain behaviors or change them. Sometimes we get stuck in a communication rut. A father once was having a hard time with his teenaged daughter. She was growing and he thought she didn't tell him what was going on in her life. They were in a heated discussion when he asked, "Why didn't you tell me?" Her answer was that she had, but he was too busy lecturing her to hear her. He learned that adjusting his style to his daughter would involve listening first before jumping right into solving the problem.
4. To build rapport, during a conversation try and match the other person's movements, posture and verbal style. Don't do everything they do, but mirror one or two things. For example, if the person gives mostly short answers to questions, you follow suit. Or, maybe they talk at a slower pace than you usually do-slow your speaking speed to match theirs. This may sound simplistic but it is a very potent way to make someone feel very relaxed and comfortable in your presence.
5. The way you communicate at home may not be the same as in a different environment. Make sure you change your style to suit the different setting. Some comments you might want to tell your best friend, in private. Other things can be shared in a group setting. Learn how to improve communication skills by altering your style for the appropriate setting. Many of us know someone who offers far too much information in a group setting.
6. Don't criticize others for communicating differently. If we all communicated in the same way, we'd soon be bored with each other. Getting a good grasp of your communication style and finding ways to accommodate other peoples' styles, is a good way to improve your communication skills.

About the Author

Peter Murphy is a peak performance expert. He recently produced a very popular free report: 10 Simple Steps to Developing Communication Confidence.

Source: <http://www.improveskillsacademy.org>