
STRAIGHT TALK[®] CHECKLIST:

39 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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10 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Acknowledge how effective communication builds trust.
2. Acknowledge that effective communication is the most important thing that humans do.
3. Acknowledge the need to get out of your “comfort zone” in order to communicate well.
4. Regularly acknowledge your inability to see things clearly. Regularly ask for help in understanding a problem or an issue.
5. Listen actively to what people say – and don’t say – in order to understand the essence of what is being said.
6. Be aware of the [four types of intent](#). Use an “affirming” mode of intent as much as possible.
7. Aim to see all sides before you try to resolve a problem.
8. Assume good intentions on the part of other people until the data prove otherwise. Check your emotional assumptions.
9. Regularly acknowledge your role as a source of conflict. Readily acknowledge the conflicts you create.
10. Balance personal disclosures about what you think and feel with inquiries into whether you’re seeing the situation clearly.

6 TIPS TO FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION STYLES

1. Regularly stretch your style of communicating. Push yourself to move to the center of the [Matrix](#).
2. Practice [identifying the styles](#) of other people. Practice tuning your style to those of other people.
3. Remind yourself about the way in which your style affects other people. Ask people: "What assumptions are other people regularly making of me? How can I counter them?"
4. When communicating criticism, adopt the language and style of the other person. Use an affirming intent.
5. Check to make sure you base criticism on data, not assumptions. Ask for feedback on how the other person sees the situation.
6. Be aware of how your communication style affects your [decision making](#).

6 TIPS TO FOCUS ON ASSUMPTIONS

1. Consciously discriminate between assumptions and facts. Help people diagnose their assumptions.
2. Balance inquiry and advocacy. Ask questions and probe the data, or lack of data, before drawing conclusions.
3. Regularly check your frame of reference. What assumptions are you making? About events? About other people? About yourself?
4. Check your assumption of competence. Acknowledge your responsibility for things that go wrong. Be humble.
5. Help people [identify the missing data](#).
6. Regularly hold meetings where you start by discussing what new facts you've learned.

5 TIPS TO FOCUS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Deal immediately with conflicts and sensitive topics. Acknowledge the “elephants” in the room.
2. Be aware of your [Inner Scripts](#). Listen to what you’re afraid to disclose.
3. Force yourself to express your Inner Scripts productively. Communicate them in the form of a dilemma. Frame them positively. Be specific in communicating the pain you experience and how it affects you.
4. Communicate your Inner Scripts directly. Don’t triangulate. Talk to Jane about problems with Jane. Don’t talk to Dick until you’ve talked to Jane, and only talk to Dick if he must know.)
5. When competing groups are in conflict, get each side to lay out their argument(s) clearly. Capture the arguments on paper. Then, get the entire group to identify the assumptions each side is making and the missing data. Build agreements by having people agree on what additional information is needed to clarify or resolve assumptions.

11 TIPS TO FOCUS ON MEETING MANAGEMENT

1. Communicate the meeting's purpose.
2. Clarify decision-making roles.
3. Match the decision-making to the meeting's purpose.
4. Provide an agenda.
5. Manage your time.
6. Adopt [protocols for meetings](#) (agendas, advance materials, minutes, timekeepers, facilitators, etc.)
7. Invite dissent. Appoint a pot stirrer for each meeting.
8. Avoid impromptu meetings. Make sure everyone who needs to be present is present.
9. Keep the meeting focused. When it strays, immediately bring it back to focus.
10. Push every meeting toward action. Record what actions were taken, not taken, and those that still need to be taken.
11. Focus the final 10 minutes of every meeting on communicating the results of the meeting. Distribute a copy of the minutes to everyone who is affected.

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