

## Keys to Effective Communication



In order to connect with people and help them understand where you're coming from, you have to do more than just state your point. Communication is complex, and often learning how to communicate effectively requires practice and skill. Fortunately, there are specific things you can do to build your communication toolbox. Follow the suggestions below to learn some of the key techniques and become a more thoughtful and effective communicator.

### Create an Atmosphere of Trust

- When speaking in a group, show others that you are a good communicator. Listen openly to each person; this will show people that you won't embarrass them or twist their words.
- Try to avoid judgment or unnecessary criticism. If you do have to provide criticism, make it constructive.
- Give praise and positive feedback.

### Get Your Thoughts Together

- Do research beforehand. Create notes, know the pros and cons of what you are presenting, and do your homework on the subject.
- If necessary, use visual tools or documents that can help your audience understand.
- Be specific, accurate, and honest about the subject.

### Adjust to Your Audience

- Consider what the other person already knows.
- If you reach a point where communicating becomes difficult, try to keep communication lines open so everyone can come to a level of understanding.
- Try not to use jargon or terms that are too technical; only use language that your listeners can understand.
- Pick an appropriate place to talk. If the subject is personal, pick a private place.

#### QUICK TIP!



Learn how to communicate with kindness when dealing with difficult people in difficult situations.

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## **Invite Feedback**

- Ask your listener what he thinks of a subject, how he just interpreted what was said, and how he feels about the issue. Invite feedback, constructive criticism, and ask about the pros and the cons of the idea at stake.

## **Use Appropriate Tones of Voice and Body Language**

- Adjust tone and body language as needed, as these two things can actually influence what the listener hears.
- Note if you sound urgent, hesitant, angry, pleased, calm, or belligerent. Only use tones that are appropriate.
- Check your body language. If you are avoiding eye contact, crossing your arms, fidgeting, or leaning in too close to the listener, you may not be sending an effective message.