

Good Communication

People are often surprised to hear that very little of what we communicate is based on the content of what we say, or words that we use – in fact it's just 7%. A more significant part of communication is played by our tone, volume and timbre of voice -38% - and the rest is a result of our physical appearance and body language -55%. The match between our verbal and non-verbal communication indicates the level of congruency in what we are transmitting.

A frequent barrier to effective communication is the natural assumption that someone will understand exactly what we mean to say, or receive the information as we would. Semantics aside, the person with whom we are attempting to communicate with will also bring to the interaction their own experiences, attitudes and present state of mind.

A way to maximise the positive potential of a conversation is to express things only from a personal point of view and, if you are talking about a difficult subject, in a non-accusatory way. For example, "I felt worried not to have heard from you," sounds very different to "Why didn't you call me?"

An awareness of the reaction of the other person as we are speaking is the best gauge of the effectiveness of our attempts to communicate, and this willingness to empathise results in a much more considerate interaction.

In essence, the most important factor for effective conversation is the genuine desire to communicate - and not just be heard.

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