

## Effective Communication Skills and Ineffective Communication Patterns

Here is a checklist of effective communication skills. They are not easy to do consistently – for anybody. Especially if our outrage meter is spinning out of control.

Did I....

- ☐ Assume positive intention on your part?
- ☐ Ask for your intention at the beginning or during the discussion?
- ☐ Ask if you have space or energy to hear me?
- ☐ Use “I language” that avoids blaming, shaming, or guilt?
- ☐ Recap what I heard?
- ☐ Clearly describe my concerns, emotions, desires?
- ☐ Ask clarifying questions?
- ☐ Avoid judgmental questions – not, “Did it ever occur to you...?”
- ☐ Ask open ended questions?
- ☐ Request a time out when I got too heated and needed a little space?
- ☐ Demonstrate sufficient patience?
- ☐ Avoid giving unrequested advice?
- ☐ Ask for permission to give advice or opinion?
- ☐ Avoid unwanted savior/rescue behavior?
- ☐ Avoid being righteous?
- ☐ Avoid sarcasm?
- ☐ Keep a sense of humor?
- ☐ Maintain good eye contact?
- ☐ Talk about how to handle it better next time?
- ☐ Ask about following up to support you?
- ☐ Own my part (contribution) of the disagreement?
- ☐ Avoid falling into my same old patterns?
- ☐ Spend more time on the solution(s) than on the problems?
- ☐ Limit the scope the problem appropriately and avoid bring up all the other times you ...?
- ☐ Avoid character assassination?
- ☐ Avoid name calling?
- ☐ Offer any empathy for your situation?
- ☐ Take time to reaffirm that our relationship is important to me?
- ☐ Recognize your strengths in this discussion?
- ☐ Give feedback which included positives?

- ☐ Avoid saying "Yes but..."?
- ☐ Avoid being bossy, nagging, controlling?
- ☐ Was I clear about what would make me feel better?
- ☐ Was my voice tone inviting, non-confrontational?
- ☐ Was my facial expression soft and/or accepting?
- ☐ Was I a basically good listener to your concerns?

Here is a list of the negative patterns of communication. They're a jolt to the system. Which of the following did you commit? They are not easy for anybody to avoid.

Did I...

- ☐ Interrupt more than necessary?
- ☐ Come across as bossy or micro-managing?
- ☐ Physically threaten you?
- ☐ Verbally threaten you?
- ☐ Clam up without saying much at all?
- ☐ Go on and on without giving you much of a chance to talk?
- ☐ Mostly justify myself?
- ☐ Mostly blame in the discussion?
- ☐ Avoid eye contact?
- ☐ Name call?
- ☐ Blame/accuse?
- ☐ Raise my voice?
- ☐ Avoid being clear about what I want?
- ☐ Criticize your desires?
- ☐ Not really listen?
- ☐ Stop asking good questions?
- ☐ Avoid being polite or civil?