



london school of supernatural ministry

BRAVE COMMUNICATION

When it happens, and it will happen, doing CONFLICT WITH HONOR

Outline of series: "Brave Communication"

- I. Introduction: You can acquire quality communication skills.
- II. Choices: we got secret codebooks and no decoder rings.
- III. Jesus' ideas about communication: Rebuke, repent, forgive.
- IV. Feelings: The dirty little secret of communication.
- V. Usual communication strategies are not so good.
- VI. The "I" message and its power to build intimacy.
- VII. Hear like you've never heard before: Practicing reflective and active listening.

I. Introduction: You can acquire quality communication skills.

A. The goal: you are able to own and mean what you say and understand what you hear.
- There are lots of communication styles I am not addressing directly, like body language
etc.

B. The fruit of self-control.

"I have the freedom to tell myself what to do and make myself do it." -Danny Silk

"I don't control others but on a good day I can control myself and manage myself in the presence of others." -Danny Silk

C. The core attitudes and behaviors of good communication.

1. Love. All of these skills function best when love is in play.

2. Negotiation is good and crisis/conflict is normal.

3. Think WIN/WIN not WIN/LOSE (I win), LOSE/WIN (I am a victim),
LOSE/LOSE (I'll just destroy things). -Stephen R. Covey *Seven Habits of Highly*

Effective People

4. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. -Stephen R. Covey *Seven Habits of*

Highly Effective People

"What's going on . . . ?"

"Could you help me understand why you thought being regularly late is OK?"

"Please help me understand your thinking when . . . ?"

"Oh no, what happened?"

"Would you walk me through your thought processes . . . ?"

"I'm confused . . ."

5. Connect first – then give content, if need be. Most often the first step is CONNECTING –
let CONTENT come after.

II. Choices: secret codebooks and no decoder rings.

- A. Your mother was half right. "It's not what you said it is the way you said it." It's both.
- B. Everybody's got a codebook they think is "standard issue" but really no two are alike. Don't judge a codebook issue. There's no right or wrong on many of these things.

BINs, CLEANING, TOOTHPASTE, SNIFFING EXAMPLES

- C. Check out all codebook confusion and 'vibes' with a SUPER POWERFUL, SOLID GOLD PHRASE: "*I'm wondering if . . .*" Instead of being suspicious of them, be highly suspicious of your imaginary ability to know what someone is thinking and/or their motives.
- D. When in doubt open up your thought process to the other person.
"I feel really awkward and anxious but I have to bring up a few things because my connection to you is weakening . . ."

III. God's ideas about communication *

At times when we are learning new communication skills, it feels uncomfortable and unnatural. "This isn't the real me. It's not how I talk." But the Scripture counsels us to be in control of our inner world and how we express it. In other words, we are responsible for our communication style.

A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. Prov. 12:16

There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. Prov. 12:18

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. Prov. 13:3

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Prov. 15:1

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. Prov. 15:4

A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it! Prov. 15:23

The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. Prov. 15:28

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Prov. 16:23

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 16:24–25

He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Prov. 17:27

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Prov. 18:20–21

* The NIV is being read on the audio recording, but the KJV is printed here.

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. Prov. 21:23

Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer. Prov. 24:26

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. Prov. 25:15

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.... Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. ... so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.... My brethren, these things ought not so to be.... Portions of James 3:1–12

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Matt. 12:34

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. Matt. 15:18

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Eph. 4:15

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Eph. 4:29

I... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:1b–3

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim 4:12

Rebuke, repent, forgive. Luke 17:1–10

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. I Peter 4:11a

IV. Feelings: the dirty little secret of communication.

1. The ability to feel is GOD GIVEN. He created us and said, "It is good!" He made, values, and enjoys this part of us. Feelings are not the problem. They are part of being made in the image of a PASSIONATE GOD! In Scripture we see God has feelings – but they are tempered by other parts of His nature.
2. Feelings are not "the real or deepest you" as the enemy and some people would have us believe. Rather, they are only a part of you. You can think about feelings, judge them, ignore them, enjoy them or choose to do other than you feel.
3. The reasons behind a feeling might not make sense to you but the feeling is still real for the individual and very powerful to them. If you value the person then you must value the depth of the feeling – because they are genuinely experiencing it – though you may not like or understand it.
4. Feelings are not always logical or reasonable – but often times they are very logical & reasonable.
5. Don't be afraid of feelings. They come and go. They are temporary. I might feel different in 10 minutes or 10 weeks; or if I get some sleep, eat, pray or connect with someone.

6. Having a feeling is reasonable, but expressing it may not be. It's not necessary that everyone knows about and treats all my feelings tenderly all the time.
7. For any feeling you have there are many possibilities about how you can express it. Hint: "Say" the negative feelings if you need to, but "Display" the good ones.
8. There are 4 main emotions: GLAD, SAD, MAD and AFRAID.
9. Your head will often lie to you about what you are feeling—YOUR BODY USUALLY WON'T. (Neither will the Holy Spirit.)
10. The more hidden your feelings are from yourself and others, the less alive you are.
11. Any time you hide a significant feeling from someone you create a "hidden agenda" and you block communication and growth with that person in that area.
12. It takes as much energy to hide and deny feelings as it does to work through them. And there is no chance the situation will build intimacy, so you might as well spend the energy in connection.
13. Intimacy is NOT "He knows exactly what I am feeling without me having to say it". Rather, intimacy is "I trust her, and our relationship, enough to tell her what I feel" and "He makes me feel safe so I want to tell him what's on my mind." SHARING FEELINGS BUILDS INTIMACY.
14. There is no such thing as the Tooth Fairy. Likewise, mind readers don't exist. It's not telepathy – it's a relationship. So we must talk to one another.
15. It is fairly easy to grow in your skill of making others feel safe in trusting you with their feelings and thoughts.
16. TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. "Others may have an attacking style, but I will not attack." "I might be the target, but I will not target another." Return good for evil.
17. The truth may be "hard", but it doesn't have to be "harsh".
18. Take responsibility for your feelings. Believe it or not, with GRACE and practice we most often can choose our response to circumstances.
19. If our feelings control our actions, it is because we have abdicated our "response-ability" and empowered our feelings to do so.
20. Try to refrain from controlling other people's emotional responses. If you are constantly protecting, hiding, out-thinking or "spinning" situations you are a big part of the problem. Tell them you are going to trust them with your feelings and then risk it.
21. Telling yourself, "It won't change the situation or do any good if I talk to them" is a form of not trusting yourself or them. It's a self-protecting deception that says, "I am a victim."
22. Crisis, pain and loss are not optional in this life. IF YOU CLOSE YOURSELF TO THESE, YOU CLOSE YOUR HEART TO OPPORTUNITY, JOY AND LOVE. These are experienced in the same spot in our

heart, and God often works in them to shape us.

23. FEELINGS CHANGE BY:

- A. Being shared and understood by God or another.
- B. Getting a different perspective of a situation (like new information or a new belief).
- C. Praying about them. Our feelings are a part of us, which is both sanctified and being sanctified. Sometimes believing a lie damages our emotions. God may work immediately and supernaturally, or work over time, or have you work through them the old fashioned way (by expressing them and being understood or renewing our mind with His word.)
- D. By being reflected upon through journaling, poetry or self-talk.

V. Usual Communication Strategies

When another is communicating a **problem**, a **strong feeling**, or a **confused** or **hidden message** TRY TO AVOID THESE TYPICAL HUMAN RESPONSES. Listen and wait. Most people don't need to be or want to be "fixed" but they want to be heard. Often, love—expressed as listening—will help them grow. TRY ACTIVE LISTENING FIRST INSTEAD OF...

A. USING POWER AND AUTHORITY TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OR BEHAVIOR.

1. Directing, ordering, commanding.
"You must, you will, you have to. Stop that. Go there."
2. Warning, threatening, admonishing.
"You had better, or else. If you don't, then..."
3. Moralizing, obligating.
"You ought to, it's your duty and responsibility to..."

B. USING INFORMATION TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OR BEHAVIOR.

1. Persuading with logic, argument, facts or instruction.
"Do you realize... The facts of the matter are... Yes, but on the other hand... Look at it this way... "
2. Advising, recommending, giving answers, sending solutions.
"What I would do is this... Let me suggest... It would be best for you to... You should try this..."
3. Questioning, probing, cross-examination.
"Why? Who? What? Where? When? How? What is the reason for?"

Avoid these because the person may...
 - a.) Simply justify their inappropriate behavior.
 - b.) Answer in a guarded, short manner.
 - c.) Or not be able to, or refuse to answer, so the conversation is over.
4. Praising, approving, evaluating positively.
"You are right. You've done an excellent job. That was a nice thing to do. My, how smart you are... etc."
5. Giving support, reassurance, sympathy. Why are you giving sympathy?
"It's really not so bad... Don't worry it will pass... You'll feel better... I felt that way too..."
6. Diagnosing, interpreting, offering insights.
"This is what your problem really is... What is really the matter is... The real issue or cause is..."

C. USING MINIMIZING MESSAGES TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR OR ATTITUDE

1. Criticizing, judging negatively.

"You are wrong... You are not thinking straight... You have made a mistake... That was very foolish..."

2. Diverting, avoiding, by-passing.

"Let's not talk about it now... That reminds me of something else... Why don't you go for a walk..."

3. Kidding, hyperbole, teasing, sarcasm, name calling.

"Why don't you burn the school down? Don't be so adolescent. When did they make you God?"

4. Silence, ignoring.

Until you change or apologize, you just don't exist.

5. You're stupid or uninformed.

"You should have known I felt this way"

"We all think..."

"Everybody knows that you don't..."

NOTE: This section, Usual Communication Strategies, is primarily from a communication training I received in 1987. The material is not original with me, it was not footnoted, and I could not find information to properly footnote it.



london school of supernatural ministry

The “I” Message and its Power to Build Intimacy Sending Direct Messages

The “it” message and the “you” message are extremely common. Most of us have been using them all our lives. Try to use more “I” messages in your normal conversation but especially use them in times of conflict, strong emotion or confusion.

1. The “it” message.

“It’s really cold in here” Translation: “Go turn down the air conditioner.”

“It’s annoying when someone whines.” Translation: “I am annoyed when you whine.”

“It’s wrong when kids drink cokes in the gym.” Translation: “Someone needs to confront you, but I don’t want a show-down.”

“It would really be great to come home to a clean kitchen some night.” Translation: “I am frustrated that the kitchen is dirty.”

“It must be nice to come into work whenever you want.” Translation: “You are late.”

These messages point to a sender who is afraid, insecure or not able to own his opinion. Lots of people use a humour or sarcasm when using an “it” message.

2. The “you” message. *This is the most popular, and often least helpful message we send.*

“You better get your act together.”

“You are lazy.”

“You did a good job planning the party.”

“You didn’t do the dishes like you said you would.”

“You have no right to talk to me that way.”

“You are breaking the rules and you know better.”

“You are late.”

If your goal is to make someone defensive, use lots of these messages. They produce a volley of “you” messages right back. They are a direct judgment. Many a “power play” has been started with these. It says very little about the sender and builds no intimacy; in fact, they are “anti-intimacy message”.

3. The “I” message. **The absolutely most helpful message.**

“I am cold, would you please turn down the air.”

“I feel annoyed when you use that tone because whining is unpleasant to me.”

“I feel really glad about the party you planned because everyone had so much fun.”

“I am concerned when you drink cokes in here, because I know it is against the rules and I am

afraid I'll get blamed."

"I feel confused. You wanted to get together but you seem quiet."

"I feel angry when you say you'll do the dishes and you don't."

"I feel demeaned when you use that tone because that's how my father spoke to me and it hurt."

"I feel really playful when you spontaneously show me affection because I feel loved."

"I am frustrated that you are late again this morning because it makes me feel like you don't value your job or me."

"I am insecure (unsure) when you seem to need space because I don't know if I should pursue you or give you some time."

These messages are direct. The sender takes responsibility. They let the other in on the feelings their behavior or response has sparked in you. It has to do with the "here and now". It is honest and elicits discussion instead of defensiveness.

DIRECT MESSAGES ARE USED ESPECIALLY WHEN I HAVE A PROBLEM, A STRONG EMOTION, OR AN UNCOMFORTABLE OR UNCLEAR SITUATION.

The "I Message" has three parts – four if you're really getting brave.

A) The feeling

B) The non-blaming description of MY observation or problem

C) THE TANGIBLE EFFECTS OF THE BEHAVIOR, RESPONSE OR "ATTITUDE" ON ME.

USE THE FORMULA ALL THE TIME UNTIL YOU GET GOOD – EVEN IF YOU FEEL AWKWARD.

"I feel _____ when _____ because _____".

D) The really brave then make their needs/likes known by suggesting some alternatives.

"So, I need _____" or "So could we _____?"

Door-openers and Invitations

One of the most effective and constructive ways of responding to feeling-messages or problem-messages is the "door opener" or "invitation to say more." These are responses that do not communicate any of the listener's own ideas or judgments or feelings. They open the door; they invite him/her to talk. The simplest of these are such non-committal responses as:

I see.

Oh.

Mm, hmmm.

How about that.

Interesting.

Really.

You don't say.

No fooling.

You did, huh.

Is that so!

Others are somewhat more explicit in conveying an invitation to talk or to say more, such as:

Tell me about it.

I'd like to hear about it.

Tell me more.

I'd be interested in your point of view.

Would you like to talk about it?

Let's discuss it.
Let's hear what you have to say.
Tell me the whole story. I'm listening.
Sounds like you've got something to say about. . .
This seems like something important to you.

These door openers or invitations to talk can be potent facilitators of another person's communication. They encourage people to start or to continue talking. They also "keep the ball with him." They don't have the effect of your grabbing the ball away from him, as do messages of your own, such as asking questions, giving advice, teaching, moralizing, and so on. They keep your own feelings and thoughts out of the communication process. The responses of people to these simple door openers will surprise you. They feel encouraged to move in closer, open up, and literally pour out their feelings and ideas. People love to talk and usually do when anyone extends an invitation.

They also convey acceptance of the person and respect for him as a person, by telling, in effect:

You have a right to express how you feel.
I respect you as a person with ideas and feelings.
I might learn something from you.
I really want to hear your point of view.
Your ideas are worthy of being listened to.
I am interested in you.
I want to relate to you, get to know you better.

NOTE: This section, Door-openers and Invitations, is primarily from a communication training I received in 1987. The material is not original with me, it was not footnoted, and I could not find information to properly footnote it.



london school of supernatural ministry

VII. HEAR LIKE YOU'VE NEVER HEARD BEFORE!

Reflective and Active Listening

USE THESE SKILLS WHEN:

1. When **you hear or have strong feelings**.
2. When you are **confused** about the message you've received.
3. When the person clearly communicates **they have a problem**.
4. When you are **problem solving**, like making plans or hearing another's point of view in order to make a cooperative decision.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Just like its title indicates, "REFLECTIVE LISTENING" means you mirror the statement you just heard. Sometimes you do it without the inflection (tone or emotions) and sometimes you do it with.

Your wife is frustrated because for several years you've waited until the last moment to schedule your vacation with your boss – and you seem to be doing it again. You already feel silly for doing this, especially when you know it bothers her, so you feel really defensive about it. She sends you a good old "I message",

"I FEEL anxious and frustrated WHEN you put off scheduling our vacation BECAUSE part of the fun for me is the weeks of looking forward and dreaming about it."

Instead of reacting, explaining or defending yourself, the first step is to repeat EXACTLY WHAT SHE SAID:

"You feel anxious and frustrated when I put off scheduling our vacation because part of the fun for you is the weeks of looking forward to and dreaming about it."

This gives you time to appreciate the good stuff she's communicating, like she looks forward to your vacations together and you've married a woman who enjoys anticipation, BEFORE you explain or communicate that vacation works differently for you, so you didn't know it worked that way for her.

Simply put, this skill: **helps the present message to really sink in** so you are not reacting to last month's conversation; **enables you to respond and not react; causes the message giver to hear the words they just gave you**. In the case of a horrible painful message, the sender has their own words repeated so they can experience their sharpness. "You hate me and think I'm ruining your life." "I feel extremely hurt..."

ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Listen to the **EMOTION FIRST** and not the content.
2. Reflect the emotion to see if you've got it right. "You sound excited", "You seem hurt", "Frustrated?"

3. Draw out the feelings they have even if they don't know what they are feeling. In other words, listen, use reflective listening, nod, say "I get that", when (and if) it's appropriate ask if they want your take or input.

This skill helps people articulate their emotions and makes them feel safe with you. It allows love and connection to do the healing instead of information. It builds intimacy and equips you to stand in the storm with someone. People feel less threatened that your agenda is to manipulate or change them. It encourages deeper talking instead of only dealing with problem solving skills.

In order for Active Listening to succeed, you've got to cultivate a couple of attitudes. You've got to be able to genuinely accept a person's feelings. Trust that the Holy Spirit will change them instead of you. Know that feelings change like a traffic light. See the other, even your kids, as people who are separate from you – they are not you. And most importantly, **YOU HAVE GOT TO WANT TO HEAR**. Don't open up a person's heart and then run off cuz you're late or tired. If you can't spend the time, offer to schedule a time when you can. Finally, don't use active listening when the person obviously needs something else from you. "Nancy, have you seen the scissors?" "Jim you seem real anxious about the scissors..."

Listening for Feelings

Here are some messages folks may send. Read the statements, listen for the feeling, jot down the feeling or feelings you hear, and write a quick response based on what you've learned. If you aren't sure of the context, just make one up. Careful, there are some trick questions!

THEY SAY	THEY ARE FEELING	ACTIVE LISTENING RESPONSE	MORE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
"I can't figure it out. I'm stupid. I give up."	1. Stumped 2. Discouraged	"You sound discouraged."	"You sound discouraged." (The Active Listening response is the most appropriate.)
"Don't ask me what's wrong. You should know. Figure it out."			
"Am I doing this right?"			
"Dear, I took out the trash."			
"They are my friends. You don't even know them you think you do."			
"You are a lazy pig."			
"I smashed those guys and won the game!"			
"What time is dinner?"			
"You always accuse me of lying."			
"I am so mad I could kill somebody."			

NOTE: This section, Listening for Feelings, is primarily from a communication training I received in 1987. The material is not original with me, it was not footnoted, and I could not find information to properly footnote it.