

Volume 1, Issue 2

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



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Volume 1, Issue 2
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Having difficulty getting along with someone? Experiencing friction with your associates at work? Having problems communicating in your marriage? Trouble understanding your teenaged children? Teens, do you have trouble understanding your parents?

Relationships of any kind, whether they be in family or friendship, working relationships or marriage, are all built on communication. You know how it is with a close friend—you share your thoughts, they understand you, you understand them. And for that friendship to grow, communication is essential.

Good communication is one of the vital foundation stones of any relationship. If the weight is shifted off this building block, if our priorities are directed to more trivial matters, then the building becomes unstable and the foundation is no longer able to properly support the structure.

This issue of *Motivated* focuses on the art of communication. We hope that the articles on this multifaceted subject will help you improve your communication skills, overcome obstacles in your relations with others, and make your life and the lives of others happier.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

BE A FRIEND

ENCOURAGEMENT CAN CHANGE A LIFE

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, “Why would anyone bring all his books home for the weekend? He must really be a nerd.”

I had quite a weekend planned—parties and a football game with my friends the following afternoon—so I shrugged my shoulders and walked on.

Then I saw a bunch of kids run at Kyle, knock his books out of his arms, and trip him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. When he looked up I saw a terrible sadness in his eyes.

My heart went out to him, so I jogged over to him. As he crawled around looking for his glasses I saw a tear in his eye. I handed him his glasses and said, “Those guys are jerks. Don’t let them get to you.”

Kyle looked at me and said, “Hey, thanks!” He broke out into a big smile—one of those smiles that show real gratitude.

I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I hadn’t ever seen him before. He said he had gone to a private school till now. I would have never hung out with a private-school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid.

I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends, and he said yes. We hung out all weekend, and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. My friends thought the same.

After the weekend, there was Kyle again with his huge stack of books. I stopped him and said, “Boy, you’re going to build some serious muscles with that pile of books everyday!” He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. We decided on different schools, but I knew that we would always be friends. The miles between us would never be a problem. Kyle was going to be a doctor, and I was going to study business on a football scholarship.

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Communication Keys

by Maria Fontaine

There would be far fewer misunderstandings if people would just honestly and openly communicate with one another. It may be a little difficult at the beginning, but if you work at it, it becomes much easier.

Why don't you try and see?

Communication is so important because it's the medium through which we connect with others. God knows our hearts. He knows what we are like, communication or no communication. But everyone else has to pretty much go by our communications with them. In essence, the way we communicate with someone is what we are to them; it's what they know us to be like. It directly affects the way others feel toward us, and thus our productivity and happiness and every area of our lives. If we don't put much effort into our communications with others, the words we speak or the way we say them or how we present things, or if we don't consider our communications with others very important, chances are that we will have a hard time getting along well with some people.

Some people are natural communicators. Other people have a harder time with it.

But no matter what level you're at in your communication skills, if you'll take a moment to apply the following tips to your communication with your husband or wife, boss, children, friends, and co-workers, you'll probably be amazed at the difference it can make.

Honesty: Unless there's honesty in communication, you're going to get your wires crossed. A good foundation to have if you want to get off on the right foot with someone is to be honest and open.

Tact: As soon as you realize you must be honest then you must also strive to be tactful. Frankness does not require being brutally so.

Love: Love is what motivates you to be truthful and sincere with others.

Wisdom: To know the difference between when you should be as open as possible and when it would be better to be more careful with your words, you need to have wisdom.

Sensitivity: The sensitivity spoken of here is that of being responsive and attentive to the needs of others. It's helpful to try to be sensitive to others' moods and feelings when communicating. For example, perhaps you know someone is in a more receptive mood after having eaten than at other times, so that might be a good time to talk with them. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Courage: Having faith gives you the courage to overcome the fears and hesitations you have about communicating. Having faith helps you to expect a positive response.

Sense of timing: Timing is vital in communication. Of course, in the smaller matters that you discuss with others on a daily basis, it's more important that you simply communicate often. But when the subject is a little sensitive, requires privacy, or may mean unpleasant news or changes for someone, then it's wise to choose the timing of your presentation when they're not in the middle of a demanding project, or coming to the close of a hectic day.

Openness to others: People will be much more at ease communicating with you if you make a habit of being open to what others have to say.

Patience: Good communication requires patience. Everyone is different and has different ways of looking at situations and solving them, so it takes patience to see things as someone else sees them, and to come to a common ground of agreement.

Respect: It helps to respect the other person's opinions and feelings. The most obvious way this is manifested in communication with others is in letting them speak their piece without interrupting or trying to hurry them along or finish their sentences for them.

Sense of humor: Lighten up. Often people hold things in, so that when they finally do take the plunge to communicate about a matter, they come across too strongly or defensively. It pays to lighten up together if things are getting too intense or unnecessarily serious.

Silence: Yes, the art of being silent is a quality much needed sometimes in communication, or rather the art of listening. It's no use trying to come to an agreement with someone if you are merely thinking about what you're going to say while they're voicing their opinion.

Humility: It doesn't pay to carry the attitude around that you're always right. Pride stalemates communication more than any other trait. You will find that as you take the position of hearing people out and sincerely considering their opinions, they will be more open to yours as well.

Your attitude of heart, the concern you have for a person, the understanding you have, and the humility in your heart towards them—realizing that each person around you knows many, many things which you don't know—are all keys to helping you become a better listener.



Regular communication:

Good communication should not be saved for special occasions, but should be part of your everyday life. People who communicate frequently understand each other the best, and are more likely to work through problems when they come up.

Clarity: Explain, explain, explain. You may think others understand exactly what you mean, but it may surprise you to realize that misunderstandings arise every day in people's lives for lack of clarity. If you're not sure whether someone understands what you mean, ask them. It's a lot more efficient than guesswork.

Talking: This may seem humorous to some people, but there are many people who settle for subtle hints, signals, and cryptic messages

as their sole forms of communication, whether personally, in working together, or trying to iron out some problem. Unfortunately, the success rate for those forms of communication is minimal, and nothing beats talking. Why not try it?

Willingness:

Communication takes just plain hard work. It takes a lot of effort, but the rewards of friendship, harmony, unity, and mature relationships are well worth the energy spent—as long as you're willing to do it.

There would be far fewer misunderstandings if people would just honestly and openly communicate with one another. It may be a little difficult in the beginning, but if you work at it, it becomes much easier. Why don't you try and see? ✦

One of the most important qualities of being a good listener is not only listening to the words that a person speaks, but listening to the words of their heart. The head has not heard until the heart has listened.

SUCCESS WITH PEOPLE

Are you really listening?

To be able to listen to others in a sympathetic and understanding manner is perhaps the most effective mechanism in the world for getting along with people and tying up their friendship for good. Too few people practice the magic of being good listeners.

In a way, each of us is “running for office” every day of our lives. The people we meet and talk with are constantly sizing us up, analyzing us, and appraising us. In their own minds they “vote” either for us or against us. They give us a vote of confidence or a vote of distrust. They decide in favor of doing business with us, or not, as the case may be. More times than you realize, the one deciding factor is, “How well did you listen?”

Most of us want the other fellow to think we are clever, intelligent, “smart.” But the person who goes around always making “smart remarks,” always knocking himself out to be “clever,” is not voted in by the other fellow as a “clever person.” Instead he gets elected to the classification of “smart-aleck” or “egotist.”

There is one sure way, however, to convince the other fellow that you are one of the wisest, most intelligent people he has ever met: Listen, and pay attention to what he has to say. The fact that you attach enough importance to what he is saying, that you listen attentively so as not to miss a single word, proves to him that you are a very smart person.

This art of listening is so important, don't pass it over without putting it into practice. Perhaps you read something that sounds good, are convinced it is true, then resolve to put it into practice. But if you don't check yourself, you forget all about it in a day or two. One way to overcome this is to list some definite things to do and start doing them. So apply the knowledge you gained from reading this and don't let it get away. Starting right now, you can practice the following:

Seven Ways to Practice Listening

- ♦ **Look at the person who is talking.** Anybody worth listening to is worth looking at. It'll also help you concentrate on what he's saying.
- ♦ **Appear deeply interested in what he is saying.** If you agree, nod your head. If he tells a story, smile. Respond to his cue. Work with him.
- ♦ **Lean toward the person who is talking.** Ever notice you have a tendency to lean toward an interesting talker, and lean away from a dull one?
- ♦ **Ask questions.** This lets the person who is talking know that you are still listening. Don't interrupt; instead, ask him to tell you more. Most people are highly complimented if you don't interrupt them until they're through. But they're doubly complimented if you draw them out. “Would you mind going into that last point a little more fully?” or, “I'd like to know a little more about what you were saying concerning such and such.”
- ♦ **Stick to the speaker's subject.** Don't change subjects on a person until he is finished, no matter how anxious you are to get started on a new one.
- ♦ **Use the speaker's words to get your own point across.** When the other fellow has finished talking, repeat back to him some of the things he has said. This not only proves you've been listening, but is a good way to introduce your own ideas without opposition. ♦

Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak.

On graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more friends than I had, and all the girls loved him. Sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those times.

I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!"

He looked at me with one of those looks—the really grateful ones—and smiled. "Thanks," he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your brothers and sisters, maybe a coach ... but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a true story."

Then I watched Kyle with disbelief as he told the story of the day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He told of how he had cleaned out his locker, so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later, and was carrying all his stuff home. He looked straight at me, and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

A gasp went through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. His mom and dad looked over at me with that same grateful smile. Not until that moment had I realized its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life for better or for worse. ✦

Friends are
angels who
lift us to our
feet when our
wings have
trouble
remembering
how to fly.

YOU ARE UNIQUE



Do you know who the happiest people are?—Those who just accept themselves the way they are, who learn to be happy with what they have and not care what others think. Struggling to live up to ideals that you think are expected of you by your peers puts a real weight on you, but there's freedom in just being what you are and who you are.

If you were honest, I think you'd admit that you really admire people who have the courage to be themselves—to live right, live healthy, and have their priorities straight. Of course, those who make such decisions and take such stands often face loneliness and a feeling of isolation from others around them, which is sad.

You know, when I was young I didn't like the way I looked. I thought I didn't look nice and that I was too skinny and ugly. I had quite an inferiority complex about that, and it took me a long time to get over it. Part of it was pride, part of it was comparing with others around me. But then as I grew older, I realized it really didn't matter.

We are loved and beautiful just the way we are. We're all unique and special. There is no ugliness, regardless of what we look like, our background, or level of education.

Building self-esteem often has a lot to do with accepting who we are. The more at peace we are with ourselves, the happier we'll be, and the more relaxed we will be. When we accept the way God made us and have His love in our hearts, we'll be handsome and beautiful and able to be our unique selves. ✦

By David Fontaine, adapted

How to deal with difficult people

By Dr. D. Burns, M.D., adapted

They criticize, they sulk, they complain. But there are effective methods of responding to them.

A businessman got into a taxi one day at rush hour. He was hurrying to make a train, and suggested a route to the station. "I've been a cabby for fifteen years!" the driver yelled. "You think I don't know the best way to go?"

The man tried to explain that he hadn't meant to offend him, but the driver kept yelling. He finally realized he was too upset to be reasonable. So he did the unexpected. "You know you're right," he told him. "It must seem dumb for me to assume you don't know the best way through the city."

Taken aback, the driver flashed his rider a confused look in the rearview mirror, turned down the street he wanted and got him to the station on time. "He didn't say another word for the rest of the ride," he said, "until I got out and paid him. Then he thanked me."

From time to time all of us have to cope with people like this cabdriver, and there's an irresistible urge to dig in your heels. This can lead to prolonged arguments, soured friendships, lost career opportunities and broken marriages. I've discovered one simple but extremely unlikely principle that can prevent virtually any conflict or other difficult situation from becoming a recipe for disaster.

The key is to put yourself in the other person's shoes and look for the truth in what that person is saying. Find a way to agree. The result may surprise you.

Sulkers

Steve's 14-year-old son, Peter, had been irritable for several days.

When Steve asked why, Peter shot back, "Nothing's wrong!" and stalked off to his room.

We all know people like Peter. When there's a problem, they may sulk or act angry and refuse to talk.

So what's the solution? Steve should start by asking himself why Peter won't talk. Could something have happened at school? Or was it something Peter was afraid to bring up because Steve becomes defensive when he's criticized?

The next time he approaches Peter he can pursue these possibilities by saying: "I noticed that you're upset, and I think it would help to get the problem out in the open. It may be hard because I haven't always listened very well. If so, I feel bad because I love you and I don't want to let you down."

If Peter still refuses to talk, Steve can take a different tack: "I'm concerned about what's going on with you, but we can talk later, when you're more in the mood."

This strategy allows both to win: Steve doesn't have to compromise on the principle that ultimately the problem needs to be talked out and resolved. Peter saves face by being allowed to withdraw for a while.

Noisy Critics

Recently, I was talking to a businessman named Frank who tends to be overbearing when he's upset. Frank told me that I was too preoccupied with money and that he shouldn't have to pay on the spot for services rendered. He wanted to be billed monthly.

I felt annoyed because it seemed that Frank always had to

have things his way.

I explained that I had tried monthly billing, but that it hadn't worked because some people didn't pay. Frank argued that he had impeccable credit and knew much more about credit and billing than I did.

Suddenly I realized I was missing Frank's point. "You're right," I replied. "I'm being defensive. We should not worry so much about money."

Frank immediately softened and began talking about what was really bothering him, namely some personal problems. The next time we met, he handed me a check to pay in advance.

There are times, however, when people are unreasonably abusive and it may be best to walk away from the situation. But if you want the problem solved, it's important to let the other person salvage some self-esteem. There's nearly always a grain of truth in the other person's point of view. If you acknowledge this, he or she will be less defensive and more likely to listen to you.

Complainers

Brad is a 32-year-old chiropractor who recently described his frustration with a patient of his: "I ask Mr. Barry, 'How are you doing?' and he unloads his whole life story: his family problems, his financial difficulties. I give him advice, but he ignores everything I tell him."

Brad needs to recognize that habitual complainers usually don't want advice. They just want someone to listen and understand. So Brad could simply say: "Sounds like a rough week. It's no fun to have unpaid bills, people nagging at you, and this pain besides." The complainer will usually run out of gas and stop complaining. The secret is not to give advice. Just agreeing and validating a person's point of view will make that person feel better.

Demanding Friends


Difficult people aren't always angry or just complaining. Sometimes they are difficult because of the demands they place on us. A friend puts you on the spot by asking that you run an errand for him while he's out of town. Your schedule is overcrowded, but you say yes—and end up angry and resentful. Or if you say no in the wrong way, your friend may feel hurt and unhappy. The problem is that, caught off guard, you don't know how to deal with this situation in a way that avoids bad feelings.

One method I've found helpful is "stalling." You're stalling when you tell the person you need to think about the request and you'll get back to him about it. Say a colleague calls and pressures me to give a lecture at his university. I've learned to say: "I'm flattered you thought of me. Let me check my schedule, and I'll call you back."

This gives me time to deal with any feelings of guilt if I have to say no. Suppose I decide it is better to decline; stalling allows me to plan what I'll say when I call back. "I appreciate being asked," I might say, "but I find I'm over-committed right now. However, I hope you'll think of me in the future."

Responding to difficult people with patience and empathy can be tough, especially when you feel upset. But the moment you give up your need to control or be right, the other person will begin relaxing and start listening to you. The Greek philosopher Epictetus understood this when he said nearly 2,000 years ago: "If someone criticizes you, agree at once. Mention that if only the other person knew you well, there would be more to criticize than that!"

Real communication results from a spirit of respect for yourself and for others. The benefits can be amazing. ✦



Put yourself in the other person's shoes and look for the truth in what that person is saying. The result may surprise you.

Be enthusiastic

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

Wholeheartedness is contagious. Give of yourself, if you wish to gain others.

One who uses many periods is a philosopher; many question marks, a student; many exclamation marks, a world changer!

Enthusiasm and persistence can make an average person superior; indifference and lethargy can make a superior person average.

Enthusiasm is the propelling force necessary for climbing the ladder of success.

People are persuaded more by the depth of your conviction than by the height of your logic—more by your own enthusiasm than by any proof you can offer.

The worst bankrupt in the world is the man who has lost his enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is essential to the triumph of truth.

Years wrinkle the skin, but lack of enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

Every man is enthusiastic at times. One man has enthusiasm for 30 minutes, another man has it for 30 days, but it is the man who has it for 30 years who makes a success of life.

Enthusiasm is the all-essential human jet propellant. It is the driving force that elevates men to miracle workers. It begets boldness and courage, kindles confidence and overcomes doubts. It creates endless energy, the source of all accomplishment.

Both enthusiasm and pessimism are contagious. Which one do you spread?

