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Welcome to

## **HOW TO MAKE GREAT CONVERSATION & SMALL TALK!**

Thanks for purchasing this e-book.

I hope you have as much enjoyment in reading this fantastic product and in benefiting from the techniques and strategies inside as I did when putting it together.

The art of conversation is a lost skill in my opinion!

People are far too busy nowadays to take the time to really communicate with anyone.

Instead people just take it in turns talking and are too busy of thinking of what to say that they don't really listen to the other person.

Hence you just get the same old:

### **PERSON A**

"I did this, this and this and then we went here and there and did that and this and then I did..."

...and then it's your turn!

### **YOU**

"Oh, that's great. I did this, this and this....."

Argghhhhhhhh!!!!

This is not communicating, this is playing verbal tennis and the match doesn't last very long either!

.....and then the dreaded silence appears when you have both exhausted yourself about talking and ME ME ME!

You are both looking at each other, both feeling uncomfortable – hoping, no praying, that the other person will say something first!

Well this e-book is all about providing you with the tools, techniques and strategies to start conversations and continue them!

I will show you specific phrases to use and when to use them.

Soon you will be a communications and small talk master!

Please bear in mind that no one is born with excellent communications skills.

You don't just appear out of your mother's womb with the gift of the gab – having said that some of the people I have met think.....

I digress!

No instead, all skills can be learned over time.

What I'd like you to do is to try the recommendations that I make in this e-book but please do not try to do everything at once!

Your mind will turn to mush if you do!

Instead, take one or two techniques at a time and try them out at work, with your friends and your business associates.

Find out what works for you and what doesn't.

I can now make conversation and small talk with anyone from any background – I am quite famous for it!

However, this wasn't always the case – I have built up my skill over time and it now it's your turn to do the same.

So in closing, I would just like to thank you once again for your support, enjoy this publication and I would just love to hear your successes along the way.

Just drop me an email – I'd love to hear from you.

Take care and god bless

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a prominent 'S' at the beginning.

Sean McPheat

## **THE SECRETS TO MAKING CONVERSATION AND SMALL TALK**

Besides feelings of low self worth and speaking in public/groups, meeting and talking to people is the most common topic that I coach and help people with in my coaching businesses.

In fact most people would rather pull their toenails out than actually have to go up to someone they have never met before and strike up a conversation!

But don't worry help is at hand!

Throughout this chapter I am going to talk you through how to communicate with people that you have never met before and teach you how to drum up conversation with people and make small talk.

The techniques work equally well with people whom you find communicating to very difficult or awkward.

Are you one of those people who meets someone new for the first time, you get past the "Hello" and then a tumbleweed breezes across the floor?!

If so, you are not alone.

Meeting people for the first time and striking up conversations can be a very daunting task, but it need not be the case.

If you understand all about other people and how they like to communicate and what they like to talk about, then striking up a conversation can be an enjoyable experience.

Honestly!

Here's how.

The problem with meeting new people or people who you do not know very well is that you tend to find that you put yourself under pressure to talk.

## **YOU PROBABLY ASK YOURSELF:**

What should I talk about?

What shall I say?

How will I fill this silence in the conversation?

You enter into these meetings and encounters with **ME ME ME** on your mind!

You forget about communicating with the other person because you are too busy thinking of what to say!

In fact you don't end up communicating you just end up taking it in turns talking!

Let me tell you something now that may shock you.

The best conversationalists in this world are the best listeners **NOT** the best talkers.

In fact, the person who says the least is often the best communicator yet you are there racking your brains thinking of things to say all of the time!

It took me years to find this out and it would have saved me a lot of time and heartache if only I had known it sooner!

Having said that this is the **BEST** tip I could ever give you if you want to be an excellent communicator

= **BECOME AN EXPERT LISTENER**

Let me explain why.

When you become an expert listener it means that the other person is doing most of the talking.

When you go into a situation where you are meeting someone for the first time, meeting a business associate or need to start a conversation go into that encounter with only one thing on your mind – **THEM**.

You must treat that person as they are the most important person in the world, because to them they are!

To build up rapport and to engage in a conversation ask questions and be intrigued about the other person not you.

So, what do you talk to the other person about?

Well, like I said before, you don't!

You let them do most of the talking and by doing this they will think that you walk on water and will in turn ask about you and that's when YOU talk!

I'll illustrate this by telling you a short story:

My wife Donna and I went to a social occasion a few years back.

It was one of those functions where Donna knew everyone and I knew No-one!

Sound familiar?

I bet you've been in those situations as well haven't you?

So there we were walking up to the function room and Donna was looking forward to meeting the family members she hadn't seen in ages and to catch up with the gossip from friends and here was good old Sean along for the ride!

I'll put my hand up and admit it was one of those functions when at the same time there was a very important game of football on the TV and here was me stuck there when I wanted to be watching the game with the guys!

I knew I had 5 hours at the function and that there was no escape so I said to myself "Come on Sean practise what you preach, let's practise my small talk techniques!"

So I did!

I went up to any one and everyone with the mindset that I wasn't going to talk about ME whatsoever and that I would just be interested in THEM!

First off, I need a starting line!

You know that question, or phrase that starts the conversation going.

So before I went up to anyone I thought to myself:

What common themes does everyone have in common within the room?

We are all there for a reason? What is the reason and what is the commonality?

You see, there is always something to talk about no matter where you are, you just need to find out what the commonality is about the situation that you are in and use this to your advantage.

So, in my case I thought:

- We were all invited along to the same function, how did the person know the invitor?
- Practically everyone in the room knew my wife Donna
- The people in the room would either be having a good time or a bad time
- We are eating the same food and drinking the same wine

The list went on.....

So with my preparation complete it was time to make some conversation starters!

Here are few that I used on the night:

"Hi my name is Sean, good party isn't it? How do you know James and Claire?"

**THIS QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO INVITED BOTH OF US**

And then go into the conversation with just them in mind.

They responded with:

"I work with James at McCranors"

**NOW THIS IS WHERE I BET YOU DRY UP? WHAT NEXT I HEAR YOU CRY?**

Seeing as I did not know anyone there I went on to say:

"McCranors? Sounds interesting? What do they do?"

Always listen out for clues and snippets of information that the other person says, because if they say something it must mean that it is important to them.

This lady could have just said:

"I work with James"

but she actually said

"I work with James **at McCranors**"

So I used this to generate more conversation!

Another question I could have asked could have been:

"Do you enjoy it there?"

I hope you are with me on this?

Another conversation starter I used were:

"Hi, I'm Sean, Donna McPheat's husband – please to meet you!"

**THIS IS A GREAT ONE TO USE AFTER I HAVE SEEN DONNA SPEAK TO THIS PERSON BECAUSE I KNOW THAT SHE KNOWS HER!**

The following morning when we had breakfast together Donna told me that everyone she had spoken to have said what a nice guy I was and that I was really interesting.

The point of the matter is this; I hardly said a word myself all night!

So, I have mentioned a little about starting conversations - you need to find some commonality between where you are, why you are there and make a mental note of these.

Then you talk to the other person as though they are the most important person in the world – because to them they are!

Let's take this a step further and look at the TOP 5 topics of conversations that people like to talk about.

### **So how do you engage the other person into talking?**

To do this it is important to understand what other people like to talk to about.

Here is the TOP 5 in order:

#### **1. THEMSELVES!**

People love to talk about themselves.

It's a fact and bet you are not an exception to that rule either!

Want to know how to build rapport with someone and to hold a conversation?

Get them to talk about their favourite subject – **THEMSELVES!**

"What are YOU currently doing career wise?"

"Do YOU enjoy it?"

"Tell me about this....."

"I hear YOU have been doing this....."

At a party:

**YOU - "Hi, how do you know the "party host"?"**

**THEM - "I know him because we went to school together"**

**YOU- "What school was that?"**

**THEM - "Gosford Park"**

**YOU - "Did YOU enjoy it there? What did YOU study?"**

Ask question to get them to talk about themselves and then ask some more questions, and then some more!

He or she will love you for it!

## **2. THEIR OWN OPINIONS**

Second only to talking about themselves, people love to air their opinions on anything and everything.

Ask these questions as well and your new friend could be talking for hours!

**"What do you think of the way Manchester United have played this year?"**

**"What is your opinion on the strike?"**

**"What do you think of XYZ programme?"**

However, whatever you do, don't get into an argument if your opinions differ, unless of course you want to make a sharp exit!

## **3. OTHER PEOPLE**

People love to talk about other people.

Some people call this gossip; other just call it talking about other people!

**"What do you think of xyz person?"**

**"Hasn't xyz person got great interpersonal skills"**

**"Isn't xyz person a real laugh?"**

#### **4. THINGS**

Next on the pecking order is talking about things.

No matter what it is your friend will have an opinion on it.

**"I love YOUR car, how long have YOU had it?"**

**"What do YOU think of this widget?"**

**"I love YOUR jacket, where did you get it from?"**

#### **5. YOU!**

All together now – ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

It's a horrible thing to say but the last thing people want to talk about is YOU!

Keep the conversation centred around the other person until they ask about you and then it is your turn.

To keep their full attention wait until they have finished talking about themselves and they have asked you a question.

Then you can talk.

When you do talk however, link it into what the other person has already said and you will really be making magical rapport.

#### ACTION PLAN

- Don't worry about what to say just go into each conversation with the other person in mind.
- Listen and ask questions about the other person.
- Then ask some more questions!
- Think about "YOU" instead of "I"
- Talk about the other person's favourite 5 subjects in order!
- Don't talk about yourself until the other person asks
- Have fun!

## Making the first move

So there you are at a party or function and you want to make the first move, but you are scared.

You are scared that they will not like you, that you will be rejected, that you will have nothing to say – the list goes on!

Guess what?

They are probably thinking exactly the same thing so don't worry about it!

Instead, take a deep breath, go over to the person and ask them an opening question.

The fact that you are both there in the same room means that you have got something in common.

Other than that, bear in mind what we have covered to date and get them to talk about their favourite subjects!

It's always best to start off with small talk and then build on this foundation.

Start on simple topics of conversation and then move on.

“There are no uninteresting people,  
only disinterested listeners!”

# HOW TO GET OTHERS TO WANT TO SPEAK WITH YOU

We've all been there.

We've seen a person enter the room and we then we say:

**"I hope he/she doesn't come over to me"**

Now why would we say that?

Well, we say that because of the first impression that we have of that person.

We don't even know this person yet we have made up our mind about him or here!!!

It's crazy I know and you should "never judge a book by it's cover" but whilst we can learn to accept people for what they are others do not.

So just live with it!

The way that you move your body and walk has an enormous effect on the way that you feel and how others perceive you.

Think back to that person again.

What did we rate them on?

Let's list them below:

- Their looks
- Their clothes
- Their facial expressions
- The way that they behaved
- The way that they walked

.....and they haven't even opened their mouth yet!!!

You see, we make our impression up of someone within the first 15 seconds of meeting anyone and this is largely due to the above factors and your body language.

If you seem friendly, open, honest, trustworthy and good company to be with then it is most likely that people are going to want to talk to you

If you look cold, closed, self centred and stand offish, people are not going to go out of their way to speak to you.

**Let's complete an exercise!**

Imagine that there are two people that have just entered a room and one looks like a person you would have no problem in talking to and the other "never in a million years!"

I'd now like you to write down what you are observing with each of these people.

	Person you would talk to	Person you would feel uncomfortable with
How are they standing?		
Where are their eyes looking?		
Where have they got their head?		
How are they talking?		
How are they moving?		
What are they wearing?		
What are their facial expressions like?		

Now think about yourself when you meet someone for the first time, and answer the questions that are in the boxes once more.

Are you in the "Person I would talk to" or the "Person I would not talk to" column?

Think about changing your body language and you will have awesome results – I can guarantee it!

You will actually make someone want to talk to you!

Right now in the box below, jot down all of the body language movements that will make you will look confident and approachable to other people:

The way that you move sends subconscious messages to your mind and this either helps or hinder the way that the feel.

**Emotion is created by motion.**

If you sit still for a long period of time your natural energy levels automatically lower.

And what happens when you get up, walk around and return to your seat?

Yes, you have more energy and you're given a boost.

I can't stress how important it is to move and act confidently and positively.

You will give off all the right vibes to everyone around you and it will make them think that you are confident even if you're not feeling it inside.

Yes, that's right.

Even if you're not feeling confident, act as though you are.

So, how do you do this?

Well, walk fast and with a purpose.

Don't saunter along, walk like you know exactly where you are going and when you get their you mean business!

Gesture with your hands as you talk, it will create motion and you know what that leads to – EMOTION!

The right gestures also have a major impact on building rapport as long as you're not shaking your fist!

All it takes is a smile!

It may sound silly, but there is a lot of power associated with a smile.

What I would like you to do is to start smiling more often.

Now, that doesn't mean that you have to walk around with a silly grin on your face all of the time.

But smile as you walk down the street, when you talk to someone, even when you look in the mirror at yourself.

You will be surprised at how better you will feel for it, and it will project a positive image to all others - one that will attract opportunities and people.

Remember that confident people are happy people and negative people are not.

Happy people are also seen as more attractive than unhappy and sad people so that is an added bonus!

You know, the way that we communicate in our appearance, posture, gesture, gaze and expression can be such a powerful tool in the way that we feel and when communicating with others.

# **HOW TO CREATE A FAVOURABLE FIRST IMPRESSION**

**As I have said before, whether you like it or not, first impressions account for whether people instantly take to you or whether you have got some winning around to do!**

**The first 15 – 30 seconds of any encounter are vital and it is very important that all of the stages of this process are managed correctly to save you a lot of work later on!**

**So how do you create a favourable first impression?**

**Read on!**

Let's cut to the chase straight away!

When you meet someone for the first time they will make their minds up about you based upon:

## **1. YOUR APPEARANCE**

## **2. YOUR BODY LANGUAGE**

## **3. HOW YOU SOUND**

## **4. WHAT YOU HAVE GOT TO SAY**

The list above is in order of importance as well!

### **YOUR APPEARANCE**

The way that you look and your grooming all have a lasting impression on the other person when you meet them for the first time.

There is an old saying that goes "Dress for where you are going, not from where you have been"

Is your dress appropriate for the occasion?

Formal? Casual? What is it?

Do the best that you can with what you have got.

To fit in appearance wise doesn't mean that you have got to wear Armani suits and look like George Clooney – although both would be an advantage!

It is the little things such as:

Are you wearing the rights colours to complement your skin tone and colouring?

Are your shoes nice and clean and shiny?

Are you well groomed?

Are you wearing the right attire for the occasion?

- There is a big difference between what you would wear for an interview and what you would wear if you were going out bowling!

Do your clothes complement your body shape and build?

Is your skin looking vibrant and healthy or are you looking washed out?

Are you clean shaven or have you got stubble?

All of the above, and there are many others, will contribute to the first impression.

Bear in mind that most of the people who meet you will have formed an impression of what you look like beforehand.

That is, if you have spoken to them before on the phone or have communicated via letter/email etc.

Some people may say, "You were not what I was expecting"

Respond to this statement with "What WERE you expecting?"

## **BODY LANGUAGE**

The main things to bear in mind are:

### **Smile!**

A smile is very very powerful.

People who smile a lot are naturally more attractive and people warm towards people who are happy.

Who would be drawn to a miser?

That doesn't mean walking around with a stupid grin on your face but you should look happy and assured and in your first encounter with the other person when you say hello to them, SMILE! 😊

## **Eye Contact**

When speaking to your friend, look them directly in the eye.

Making eye contact builds up trust and is a sign of confidence.

People will like you for it.

You know yourself the power of trust and how you feel towards a person who looks you in the eye.

## **Stance and Posture**

If you are walking, stand tall and proud.

If you are sitting imagine you have got a ruler down your back and sit up straight!

Walk with a purpose and as though you have got the most important place to go, because you have remember!

Don't be slouched over like a couch potato!

Act confidently even if you don't feel it.

No-one will know the difference!

## **Handshakes**

There is only ONE WAY to shake hands, so I will keep this simple!

When you greet someone for the first time:

- Shake their hand firmly but not too hard
- Look them in the eye
- Smile
- And say "Hello, nice to meet you"

That's it, nothing more to say!

## **HOW YOU SOUND**

The natural tendency is to talk at a thousand miles per hour when you are a little nervous.

Pace yourself and speak a little slower.

Take a couple of deep breaths and relax.

How you sound is important so sllllllllloooooooowwwwwwww down and talk confidently!

## WHAT YOU HAVE GOT TO SAY

Well, this had to come into it somewhere but it's not as important as you think.

Apart from a job interview, you will actually be doing less of the talking yourself if you are an excellent communicator.

Note how I said excellent communicator and not excellent talker!

A lot of people just take it in turns talking when they meet rather than communicate.

I bet you all know of people who can run their mouths off and never listen!

## IN SUMMARY

When meeting anyone for the first time **93%** of the communication and impression that they make of you will be down to the way that you look, your body language and the sound of your voice.

Only **7%** will be down to the words that you use.

Have you been concentrating on the 7%?

If so, don't worry.

You now have some excellent techniques and knowledge to be able to create that positive first impression with anyone that you meet.

Good luck, I'd love to hear how you get on.

## HOW TO KEEP CONVERSATIONS GOING

Someone came up to me not so long ago and said:

**“Sean, you are so lucky to have the conversation skills that you have got, what is your secret?”**

This reminded me of a story about Gary Player, the famous South African golfer.

Gary Player had just won yet another major and was being interviewed by the world’s press.

**Reporter** - “Yet, another major Gary - congratulations. A lot of people around the world say that you are the luckiest golfer they have ever seen – what’s your secret?”

“My secret is practice and preparation” **replied Gary Player**

**Reporter** - “No, I’m on about the luck that you have when you play, you seem to get ALL of the breaks, ALL of the lucky bounces – wouldn’t you agree?”

At this point, Gary Player, took his baseball cap off, scratched his head and said:

**“You know what? It’s really weird. Because the harder I practise and prepare for my matches, the luckier I become!”**

Never has a true word been spoken.

No-one is ever born with talent or with the ability to be a great conversationalist – you just ask any 3 month year old baby and they will tell you!

With practise and preparation you too can be what ever you want to be in life and that includes being a master communicator.

When you go into any conversation from now on, I want you to really listen hard and communicate rather than just talk and pass the time.

Be prepared, think of what you are going to say and how you are going to say it.

Think about your first impression and your opening conversation starter.

Focus on the other person and what he/she is saying.

Stick to these rules and you will be able to keep conversations going no problem.

Below are some more tips for winning conversations:

## **INVOLVEMENT**

I mentioned earlier the importance of both people being involved in the conversation.

For example, if you are asked for your opinion, give it! But also spin it around to ensure that communication takes place about your opinion.

Let's look at an example:

### **PERSON:**

"What did you think of George Bush's speech last night?"

### **YOU:**

"I thought it was good, I thought he came across well and motivated me. He told us what the troops were doing and what the current state of play was – which I thought was good"

Now, the problem with that reply from you is that it is a DEAD END STATEMENT.

That means that there is no natural flow to the conversation and it could just stop there and one of those DEADLY silences comes along!

Instead there are several opportunities for a better reply that involves the other person – let's look at a few:

### **PERSON:**

"What did you think of George Bush's speech last night?"

### **YOU:**

"I thought it was good, I thought he came across well and motivated me. Did you think so?"

or

### **YOU:**

"I thought it was good, I thought he came across well and motivated me. He told us what the troops were doing and what the current state of play was – which I thought was good, did you think that way as well? Did you think he covered everything that you needed to know?"

With the alternative replies above you are engaging and continuing a conversation rather than just answering questions like at an interview!

Try it yourself.

Next time this happens, answer the question and then spin it around so that the other person has to share their opinion.

### **DON'T INTERRUPT**

When the other person is talking, I know it is hard at times, but please do not interrupt them when they are having their say.

What they are talking about is important to them so please respect this.

Also, if you do interrupt you get back to the "taking it in turns to talk" scenario!

### **HOW YOU SAY THINGS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT YOU ACTUALLY SAY!**

Remember the importance of your body language signals that you are giving out all throughout the conversation.

Not only when you are talking but also when you are listening as well.

Vary the tonality and inflection in your voice – do not sound monotone.

If you are saying, "That's really interesting" I would expect you to say that in an energetic way that made me believe that you meant what you were saying.

So many conversations break down due to the lack of positive vibes and body language from the other person.

Make sure you are not one of them!

## **AWESOME ONE LINERS FOR YOU TO USE!**

Here are some witty one liners that you can drop into your conversations.

They'll get a giggle and people will think you are so sharp that you could cut yourself!

Use them sparingly otherwise they will lose their impact!

### **AGE**

Be nice to your kids, they'll choose your nursing home!

Few women admit their age, few men act it!

I intend to live forever! So far so good hey?

I started out with nothing and still have most of it

One good thing about losing your memory is that you get to meet new people everyday!

The tragedy with life is that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it!

You know you're old when everything on you either dries up, leaks or shrinks!

### **CAREER/WORK**

I always try to do the extra mile at work but my boss finds me and brings me back

I have not failed - I have just found 5,000 ways that will not work!

I know hard work never killed anyone - but why chance it?

I pretend to work, they pretend to pay me

If at first you don't succeed, redefine success

If work is so terrific, why do they pay you to do it?

Multi-tasking is screwing up several things at once

The only person getting all of his work done by Friday is  
Robinson Crusoe

Work fascinates me; I could sit and watch it for hours!

## CHILDREN

A babysitter is a teenager pretending to be an adult while  
the adults are out pretending to be a teenager

Kids in the back seat cause accidents, accidents in the  
back seat cause kids

## DIETS

A balanced diet is having as much dark chocolate as white

I'm on a 30-day diet. So far I've lost 15 days!

## MONEY

A bargain is something you can't use at a price you can't  
resist

All I'm asking for is the chance for me to prove that  
money can't make me happy!

Always borrow money from pessimists - they never expect  
it back!

I have enough money for the rest of my life....as long as I pass away next week

I wish the buck stopped here.....I could do with a few!

Money isn't everything but it's right up there with oxygen

## LIFE

A status symbol is a symbol, not status.

Life is all about common sense, but common sense is not common

Always remember that you are unique, just like everyone else!

Half of being smart is knowing what you're dumb at!

Everyone know what to do in life but they don't do what they know

He who laughs last, thinks slowest

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything

It's better to remain silent and let people think you are stupid rather than speak and remove all doubt!

Never miss a good chance to shut up!

No sense in being pessimistic, it wouldn't work anyway

Remember that it's the second mouse that gets the cheese!

The secret to getting ahead is getting started

## LEARN HOW TO SAY "NO" AND MEAN IT!

How can you confidently respond when someone makes a request you'd prefer not to accommodate?

This article shares some ideas you can use to make sure you don't find yourself doing something you'd very much prefer not to do.

The question has just been posed. Pause.

Was your inclination to say yes, even though there's a voice deep down saying "no."

Well, let's raise the volume on that voice.

What possible reasons could there be for saying no?

- It's beyond your means?
- It's beyond your comfort level?
- You have no interest?

Identify all the reasons you have for saying "no." Identify which stem from a lack of confidence, versus a sincere disinterest in fulfilling the request.

What would happen if you said yes? Perhaps:

- You would be considered a teamplayer
- It would make your boss happy
- Your visibility with higher-ups would be improved

It's comes down to a simple cost/benefit really.

Would the discomfort involved in saying yes outweigh the benefits of possibly going along with the request?

Or, do the benefits outweigh your temporary discomforts?

The role of guilt

Saying "no" is hard for many of us.

Guilt often comes into play.

Whether this guilt has its foundation in religion, a proper upbringing, or a worldview that simply says "it's not nice to say no", we often recognise it and make decisions we'd rather not be making, based upon it.

Saying "NO"

You've made the decision, after scientifically weighing the results of your cost/benefit analysis, do honestly say "NO".

Well, go ahead and say it clearly, and self-assuredly...in the mirror.

Look yourself in the eye, and do it. Just say "NO."

Say it like you really mean it, and then say it again as you would to whomever made the request of you. When you pretend you're speaking to the person who made the request, does it come out differently?

Practice and experiment with different ways to say "NO" until you find one you're comfortable with.

Then go, and say "NO."

After you say "NO"

If you're used to giving in to others, then guess what?

After all that practice, you may just be surprised to find that they are not willing to accept it!

They may push, rephrase the question, or make a new, not altogether different, request.

Be prepared for this! Know your boundary—what ARE you willing to do?

Revisit the questions you asked yourself before—what would happen if you said no, or yes?

If you are serious about saying "NO" then stick to your guns.

Tell the individual making the request that you would appreciate it if they respected your wishes, and ask them to refrain from pursuing it further.

If you are comfortable expressing your "reasons why" then do so speaking from your personal perspective.

Tips on how to say your "NO!"

### **1. The "Wet lettuce NO"**

If you are going to say NO, you must say it in a way that means NO!

Saying NO in a quiet, unassuming voice is like a hand shake that is floppy and limp.

By saying NO in a non-confident manner it will make you feel as though you have got to convince the other person about your decision and the reasons why you have said it!

## **2. The "Mr Angry NO"**

This is at the other end of the spectrum in how to say NO.

It is done in an aggressive manner and usually said with contempt.

It is not an effective way to communicate your NO.

Here are a couple of examples:

"NO. I'm not doing that rubbish. You've got to be joking aren't you"

"NO. I wouldn't lower myself to do that piece of work"

## **3. The assertive NO**

This is the best way to say NO!

In a firm, yet polite voice say:

"No. I will not be able to do that for you"

Also, if you want to say the reasons why, keep it short and sweet.

"No. I will not be able to do that for you. I will be having my hair done at that time"

## **4. Use effective body language**

When saying NO remember the power of non-verbal communications.

Look the person in the eye when you say the NO.

Shake your head at the same time as saying NO.

Stand up tall.

Use a firm tone in your voice.

## **5. When all is said and done**

Don't forget that when anyone asks a question of you, you are perfectly OK to say, "Can I think about that and get back to you"

No-one should be pressurised into giving an immediate answer, even if the delay is only a couple of minutes. It will give you some time to think it through and to gather your thoughts.

It will also give you some time to think about how you are going to say it, the words to use and your body language.

## **Saying NO exercise**

Practice makes perfect as they say!

What I would like you to do for the next 7 days is to start to say NO more often.

So whether it is the double glazing salesman, the cold call, "Would you like fries with that" or the shop assistant – practice saying NO to one person for at least the next 7 days.

You will be an expert come the end of the week!

What will happen?

- You will feel much more confident and proud.
- You will find that practice makes perfect—the more you confidently say "NO" the easier it becomes.
- Others will respect your wishes and take you seriously the first time you say "NO."
- You won't find yourself doing things you never wanted to do in the first place.
- You'll have more time to focus on the things you do want to be involved in.
- The list goes on from there...

# HOW TO FEEL GREAT IN A MOMENT!

**The power of the mind is a truly remarkable thing.**

How you feel in any given moment is linked to:

- What you are focussing on
- The way that you are moving and using your body
- The language you are using

Your mind controls all three!

If you are feeling lethargic or need an instant confidence/energy boost just remember that you can change the way that you feel by changing the above 3 points.

## **1. What you are focussing on**

Be aware of what you are focussing on in that very moment.

Are they negative and lethargic thoughts?

Low in confidence?

You might fail?

I bet you are saying to yourself that you feel low in energy!

What would you have to focus on to feel vibrant and full of energy?

What would you have to focus on to FEEL confident?

If you could feel vibrant and energised right now, what you be thinking about?

## **2. The way that you are moving and using your body**

This is also called your physiology.

Emotion is created by motion.

The fewer movements you make the less energy you will have!

And also the type of movements that you make will have an impact on whether you feel juiced up or whether you want to get back into that bed!

When you are feeling low in confidence notice how you are moving your body.

Are you sat down?

Is your head up or down?

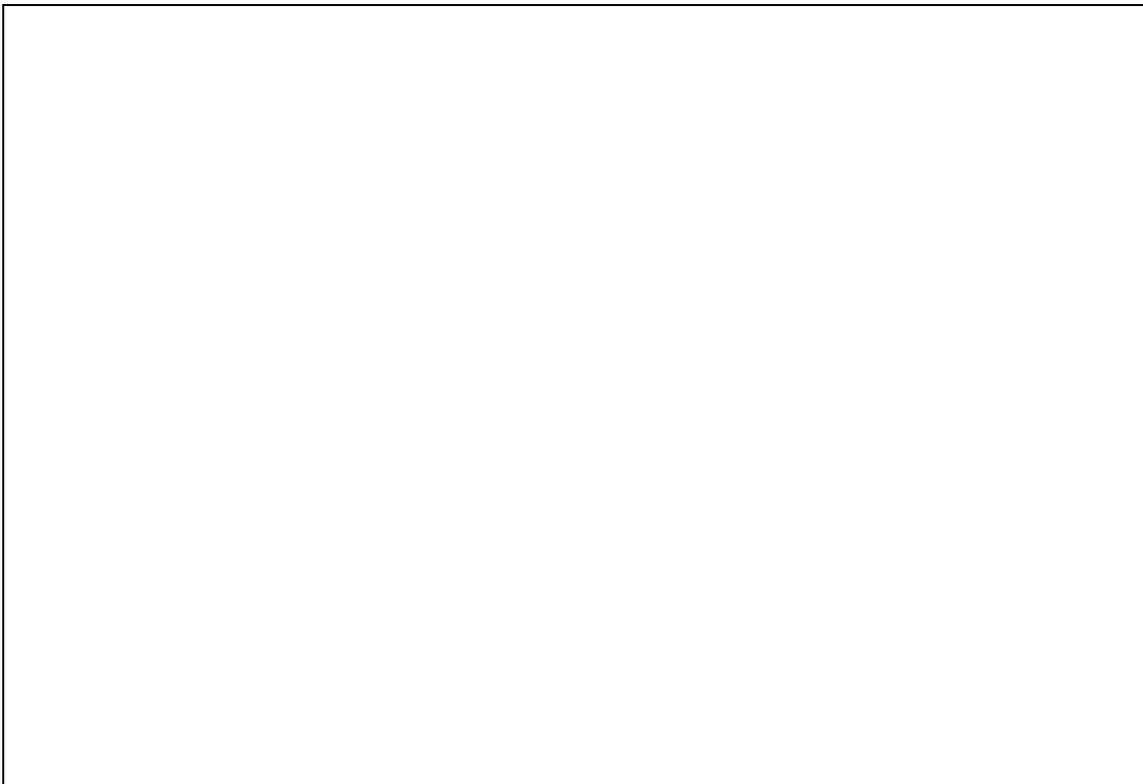
Are your shoulders back or slouched?

Are you walking slow or quick?

Are you moving your facial muscles?  
What are you doing with your hands?

Are you moving the way a person with confidence moves?

Write down below all the characteristics of a confident person. If you saw one right now how would they be moving their body?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write down characteristics of a confident person and how they would be moving their body.

Want to feel energised and confident?

Copy the movements that you have written above when you are feeling low and YOU WILL become confident!

### 3 The language that you are using

The words that you say to yourself in your mind and out aloud will have an impact on how you are feeling.

What words do you use to describe negative emotions?

Do you use:

"I'm feeling tired"

"I'm stupid"

"I'm angry"

"I'm livid"

"I'm overwhelmed"

"I'm feeling insecure"

"I'm depressed"

Write down some more of the common phrases that you use like those above:

The intensity of those negative sayings will have an effect on how you feel and whether you feel confident or not.

Just imagine that instead of saying –

“I’m really nervous”

You said to yourself –

“I’m really excited”

Do you think it would make you feel better?

Of course it would. The feelings and emotions linked to nervousness and excitement are actually the same.

So, what other words could you replace the negative sayings with:

Try swapping :

“I’m feeling tired” to “I’m feeling unresourceful”

“I’m stupid” to “I’m learning”

“I’m angry” to “I’m a little annoyed”

“I’m livid” to “I’m a little miffed”

“I’m overwhelmed” to “I’m feeling busy”

“I’m feeling insecure” to “I’m questioning”

“I’m depressed” to “I’m feeling I’m not on top of things”

When you lower the intensity of the words and phrase you lower the intensity of the feeling.

Write down 5 old negative sayings or phrases that you say on a consistent basis and replace them with new empowering and less intensified ones:

### **OLD NEGATIVE PHRASES**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

## **NEW EMPOWERING/LOW INTENSITY PHRASES**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

### **How to feel magnificent and confident every single day!**

We have talked about how changing the vocabulary you use have an impact on how you feel.

Lower the intensity, lower the feeling when you use negative words.

The opposite can be said when you want to feel great.

Increase the intensity, increase the feeling when you use positive/good words.

What do I mean by this?

Well, instead of saying –

“I feel good”

say

“I feel fantastic!”

Here are some more –

Change:

“I feel ok” to “I feel awesome”  
“I feel motivated” to “I am driven”  
“I feel confident” to “I feel unstoppable”  
“I feel energised” to “I feel juiced”

Write down some of the “good” words that you have been using in the past and replace them with “magnificent” words that you will use in the future.

When you start to use this the impact will be AWESOME!

## **OLD "GOOD" PHRASES**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

## **NEW "MAGNIFICENT" PHRASES**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

## **HOW TO COMPLAIN EFFECTIVELY**

**A lot of people settle for sub-standard service because they haven't got the confidence or communication skills to complain.**

**Rather than sticking up for themselves they allow the retailer or restaurant to get away with providing faulty goods or bad customer service.**

**So how do you complain with confidence?**

Right from the outset, this article is not about any Trades Description acts or any legislation. This article has been written on how to prepare and complain with confidence.

If I had a pound for every time that I have heard the term "The customer is always right" I would be a very rich man!

However, despite this saying, I'd bet that sometime or another we have all experienced poor customer service or faulty goods.

But don't you tend to complain to your spouse or friends about it rather than tell the company!

This is a fact of life – people are not very good at complaining and most people do not have the confidence to do it.

Because his marriage isn't working, a man will complain down the pub to his mates rather than complain to his wife!

The same can be said in the majority of cases when you SHOULD complain to a company that have not met your standards.

Companies should be made aware of sub-standard services and goods – they cannot correct a problem if they are unaware that one exists in the first place!

Effective complaining is a survival skill that anyone can master and everyone should.

**You are in the driving seat, so drive!**

If you need any reason to pluck up the courage to complain just remember that you have or are going to part with your hard earned cash for this service or good and:

**\* THAT GIVES YOU EVERY RIGHT TO COMPLAIN \***

Also remember that you will not be the first person to complain and you will not be the last so don't worry about that.

As long as you complain assertively and don't show anyone up by shouting or losing your cool, then both you and the company will come out of this with a win.

You will come away having had your complaint dealt with effectively and the company will come away with some excellent feedback to improve the goods and services that they provide to the customer.

In fact, they should thank you for your complaint – which in the majority of cases they actually do.

### **Deal with facts not opinions**

One of the most important rules when complaining is to have all of the facts.

So, if you have purchased faulty goods, have you got the receipt, date, time, price any further details relating to the purchase.

If you are receiving service, what specifically are you complaining about?

Be specific. Don't use comments like "This is rubbish" or "This person needs a personality transplant!"

Instead, use specific statements like:

"Excuse me, we have been waiting for 30 minutes for our order and it hasn't arrived yet. We also waited for 40 minutes for the Starters, could I please speak with the Manager?"

With regards to being specific and factual based, you are more likely to get good service in response and a sympathetic ear.

### **Think about the outcome you would like**

Before you complain, think in your mind how you would like the matter to be resolved:

- Full refund?
- Replacement?
- Free dessert?
- An apology?

And to be afraid to ask for the outcome either!

## **Complain assertively, not angrily**

Don't go shouting or being nasty to anyone. Instead keep things factual and explain the situation in a calm yet firm manner.

Shouting the odds will put the other person on the defensive from the outset.

Instead try saying something like:

"Excuse me, I've got a problem with these shirts. Could you help me with it?"

Even if you do feel angry, avoid the temptation for a row no matter how tempting it is!

You want a speedy resolution to your problem and this is best done with sticking to the facts, not being personal and having an outcome already in your mind.

## **If at first you do not succeed!**

If the person you are dealing with in person or on the telephone cannot help you or is not responsive to your needs then ask to speak to the manager.

However, don't do this in an aggressive way. Instead ask for the manager in a firm but polite voice.

"I appreciate that you have done all that you can do to help me and I thank you for that. But could I please speak to the manager?"

## **Explain what will happen if you don't get a positive response**

If you are not getting what you want from the company, explain what will happen if you don't get the action that you want.

Have you been a loyal customer?

If so, tell them and also tell them that they will no longer have your business unless this is sorted out.

If you have referred others to them, point that out as well

## **The last word**

Don't think that complaining is wrong, view it as providing feedback rather than a complaint.

If you were running a business and one of your customers experienced poor service I am sure you would want to know about it and put it right – wouldn't you?

Raise your standards as a consumer and stand up for what you and the law feels is right!

Happy complaining! 😊

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE TOUGH MESSAGES

Providing feedback to staff is always tough, but if it's "constructive," you not only get the message across, but, build a more cohesive and capable team as a result.

Do you remember when your parents told you to eat your veggies because they were good for you?

Now that you're an adult, you know they were right.

Well, just as they were right from the beginning, I'm asking you to trust me when I tell you this: constructive feedback is the only way to learn and develop—both personally and professionally.

That means, you as Manager, have a responsibility to your staff to help them develop. That means, you have to give constructive feedback.

## **What is constructive feedback?**

First, I'll tell you what it's not.

Constructive feedback is not criticism (which has a negative connotation because it is so often generalised and personal).

Constructive feedback is not personal (e.g. you are lazy), but a targeted response to an individual's action or behaviour (e.g. you did not accomplish the task you agreed to complete) that is intended to help them learn, and is delivered from a place of respect.

Constructive feedback is not "closed" but rather invites the individual receiving the feedback to shed light, share their perspective, or provide their response. (E.g. Do you see it differently?)

Constructive feedback does not blame, but presents a collaborative approach to problem solving. (E.g. If we are all to go home tonight on time, task A needs to get done. What support can the team offer to finish task A, so that everyone gets to go home on time.)

## **Why constructive feedback works**

Constructive feedback enables us to give honest, "tough messages" to those with whom we work.

However, instead of insulting, shutting-down others, or alienating those who receive the feedback, and thus lowering their morale and their resulting productivity, it motivates them to ask for help, and acknowledge a skill or competency deficiency, while feeling supported and respected.

Two of the most important factors influencing employee retention/satisfaction are: "great boss," and "feeling part of a team" (Hay Group Study on retention). Constructive feedback, because it is delivered out of respect and a genuine desire for the individual to improve, accomplishes both.

Providing feedback, in this way, enables you to build the competency and cohesiveness of your team, while effectively managing performance issues. It also enables you to remain respected, well liked, and overall, considered " a great boss."

## Principles of feedback

### **1. Choose correct timing for feedback**

Praise is most effective when given as soon as possible after the behaviour has occurred.

Immediate feedback will help to reinforce a correct behaviour and make it more likely to happen again.

When an incorrect behaviour is not corrected with feedback, the staff member may incorporate it into his or her customer or colleague interactions unknowingly.

It is highly desirable, when possible, to give corrective feedback before the situation occurs again.

### **2. Ask for self assessment**

Beginning by asking the person for self-assessment involves them in the feedback process.

It helps to promote an open atmosphere and dialogue between the person doing the coaching and the person being coached.

Often the person is well aware of his or her won strengths and weaknesses.

It is more effective to allow the person to voice opinions before providing your own assessment of performance.

Through self-assessment, the person can gradually assume more responsibility for his or her own abilities and performance.

### **3. Focus on specifics**

When you focus on a specific correct or incorrect behaviour, you remove the feedback from the sphere of personality differences and the other person will be more willing and able to change.

For example, when providing corrective feedback:

Do: "When you were talking to customer xyz, I noticed that you forgot to use her name"

Don't: "You are not building rapport with the customer"

When providing praise:

Do: "When you spoke to customer xyz, I noticed that you used really good open and closed questioning techniques"

Don't: "You communicated well there"

### **4. Limit feedback to a few important points**

Good coaches and communicators identify one or two critical areas and help the person address them one at a time.

It is too hard to examine and try to change many aspects of behaviour at one time.

Restrict your feedback to one or two important points so that you do not overwhelm the other person with too many things to consider.

### **5. Provide more praise than corrective feedback**

Positive reinforcement is one of the strongest factors in bringing about change.

Unfortunately a lot of people always focus on the negative.

When you give corrective feedback, remember to point out corrective behaviours first. This is as important as pointing out mistakes and areas that need improvement.

And always end the conversation on a positive.

## 6. Give praise for expected performance

People deserve to be praised for doing their job to the expected level. Too many people take the expected level for granted however.

Remember that praising anyone who meets established standards is as important as praising the exceptional performer.

Praise is a strong motivator, and enough praise may be what it takes to turn an average employee into an exceptional one.

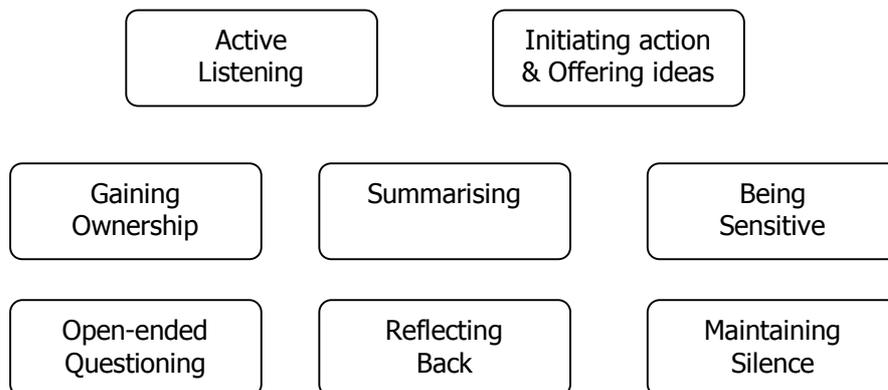
## 7. Develop Action Plans

Work together to identify the desired performance or result and how it can be achieved.

Decide when the steps will be accomplished.

### Useful techniques to use when giving feedback

Now that we have highlighted the main principles of giving feedback, let's look at some useful techniques we can use in feedback sessions:



### Open-ended questioning

**Use open-ended questions to allow and encourage the person to give more detail and elaborate.**

## Use words like:

**What?  
How?  
Who?  
Tell me?**

Avoid closed questions when you are trying to get more information from someone.

Avoid words like:

Do you?  
Did you?  
Have you?

Also be careful when you use the word "Why".

The person may think that you are blaming them or being critical if you use it.

They may think that you disagree with them if you use this word.

## Reflecting Back

**This is about putting what the other person has said into your own words and reflecting it back.**

This is called paraphrasing and by doing this it shows that you are listening and more importantly that you are listening and understanding!

For example:

Individual – "I always seem to get the rough end of the stick - no-one listens to me at all....."

You – "You seem concerned that no-one listens to you and that you seem to be getting a dumb deal"

## **Maintaining Silence**

**Encourage the person to take their time.**

Always give the other person time to think through their reply to a challenging answer.

Do not feel uncomfortable about silences but do be wary that silence can make people feel very uncomfortable.

Maintain eye contact and demonstrate an interest.

## Summarising

**Summarise the output of the meeting and action plan to ensure that you have heard correctly and understood from his/her perspective.**

Restate the key aspects of the feedback discussion

Conclude the discussion and focus on planning for the future.

Example: "The three major issues you raised were....."  
" To summarise then....."

## Being Sensitive

Acting sensitive to the needs of the person is important as they may reject the feedback initially.

Give the person space to think in his/her time. This may help the person to absorb the feedback

## Initiating Action and Offering Ideas

### **Example:**

"Can you think of an action that would help build on your skills in this area?"

Offer ideas without forcing your personal opinion.

"One thing you might do is...."

"Have you thought about....."

"Your options include....."

"What can I do to help?"

## Gaining Ownership

**Help the person to integrate the feedback into their own experience and view of themselves.**

Link the feedback as much as possible to business results and objectives – this will help increase ownership.

Any change in behaviour will only occur through acceptance and ownership of then feedback by that person.

## Receiving Feedback

**As long as feedback is given in a non-judgmental and appropriate way, it is a valuable piece of information for learning and for our continued development as a person.**

Constructive feedback is critical for self-development and growth; here are some points to bare in mind when you receive feedback.

1. Don't shy away from constructive feedback, welcome it
2. Accept feedback of any sort for what it is – information
3. Evaluate the feedback before responding
4. Make your own choice about what you intend to do with the information

## The feedback emotional rollercoaster

Whether you are giving or receiving feedback it is useful to bare in mind the following model when it comes to people who receive feedback.

### **D A W A**

#### **DENIAL**

When people first receive feedback, they have a tendency to deny it. Please avoid immediate defensiveness – arguing, denying and justifying. This just gets in the way of your appreciation of the information you are being given.

#### **ANGER**

After the denial stage comes anger! So you've been told that your work is not as good as what it ought to be. You've said, "It's as good as always" so you are denying it then you become angry as it stews in your mind and body. The immediate reaction is to fume!

#### **WITHDRAWAL**

After the anger has calmed down, the person has had time to reflect and ponder on the feedback. "Well, I have been making more mistakes then normal" This is when time is taken out to mull over the feedback and think about what it actually means.

#### **ACCEPTANCE**

The final part of this model is finally accepting the feedback, assessing its value and the consequences of ignoring it, or using it. "I HAVE been making mistakes"

# A model for giving feedback

**It's called BOCA!!!!!!**

**B**ehaviour - "when you disrupted the meeting"

**O**utcome - "people felt uncomfortable"

**C**onsequences - "as a result, they stopped contributing"

**A**ctions - "what/how could you have handled it differently?"

Listening skills are vital for coaching and giving feedback.

But some people listen but they don't hear!

**E** - **Encourage**

**A** - **Ask Questions**

**R** - **Reflect**

**S** - **Summarise**

## Active Listening Guidelines

1.	<b>Use open questions to encourage the other person to talk</b>	"Can you tell me which issue you would like to discuss and why"
2.	<b>Paraphrase what they say</b>	"So as I understand it, what you are saying is....."
3.	<b>Reflect the implications</b>	"So that may mean....."
4.	<b>Acknowledge the underlying feelings</b>	"That must have been really hard for. How did that make you feel?"
5.	<b>Encourage further contribution</b>	"Tell me a bit more about that.." "What happened next.."
6.	<b>Use encouraging non verbal responses</b>	Eye contact Nodding Um humh

## Deal With Facts Not Opinions

Below are some examples of statements that managers have used about their employee's behaviour at work.

Some statements are descriptions of what the individual actually said or did.

Others are statements of opinion, rather than genuine observations of what was actually said or done.

Please read the examples that follow and indicate whether the statement is **FACT (F)** or **OPINION (O)**.

1. I consider she was the leader of the group
2. During the discussion she noted that the team was running over time. She told the group about the time issues and made a suggestion on how to cover the tasks within the remaining time.
3. It is clear to me that the group situation put her under a lot of stress
4. He came up with some very creative ideas during the meeting

5. Just before the end of the discussion, she summarised the actions that the group had decided on.
6. She was very good at organising the group to work together on the task
7. She spotted the key advantages and disadvantages of the group's recommendations and explained them clearly to the rest of the group.
8. He was very team orientated
9. When the facilitator asked her to read out her short list of options, she listed each one in priority order with reasons for her choice. She suggested different approaches to the task one of which was accepted by the group.
10. He spoke a lot during the half hour session
11. Her participation in the discussion was very good.
12. He leant across his neighbour and waved his hands in her face in order to make his point.
13. He was very quiet during the discussions: his contribution consisted of three questions and a "yes" to indicate agreement to the group decision.
14. Half way through the discussion, she got up and walked out of the room.

# **ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**Communication is so vital to everything that anyone does because we are usually required to seek solutions, information and help from others.**

It is without doubt the most important skill that anyone can improve and let me tell you that the results of doing so can be outstanding.

The results can improve your relationships with clients and colleagues, loved ones and associates – you name it!

Everyone can communicate in one shape or form.

But haven't you seen those people whose communication and interpersonal skills just seem to be on another level?

They seem to have everyone doing whatever they say, the person is liked and respected by all, they can talk to strangers and build up rapport effortlessly!

***That's the difference between communicating and communicating effectively.***

Communication goes far beyond the actual words that you say.

More importantly it's how you say it and the way that you act while you're saying it.

It depends on the other person's view of the world and their preferred learning style with regards to absorbing information and what you say that will determine whether you are successful in this area or not.

Effective communicators can elicit all of the action signals and communication strategies from a person and adopt their style to make sure that their communications are effective.

This section is all about providing you with the communications armoury for you to be able to communicate effectively with anyone and at any level, it goes far beyond a beginner's guide to communication and focuses upon some more of the advanced communication techniques available.

You will learn how other people think and how they prefer to learn and thus you will be able to tailor your communications to maximise your effectiveness.

**\* EXERCISE \***

Write down all of the communications that you have with people.

Take a blank piece of paper and write your name in the middle and then around your name write down everyone who you have communications with most frequently.

So this will include friends, family, work colleagues, people at your sports club, at the gym etc.

Please write down their names.

Aren't they so diverse!

You could have friends, family, the CEO, the cleaner – you name!!!

Each one requires a different communications strategy!

# THE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS

**Communication is the transmission of information.**

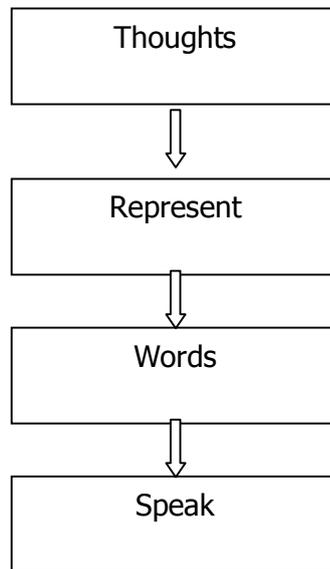
Let's just think for a moment or two of how the communication process kicks into action.

Firstly, a person has some thoughts that they want to communicate.

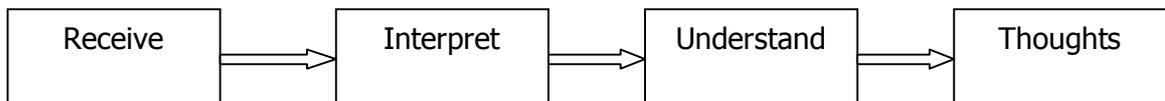
They then put all of these thoughts into a logical sequence.

Then, these thoughts and representations are put into words and then they are then spoken.

Easy hey!



Ok, so let's think of the person who is receiving the information.



The words are heard from the second person and then are interpreted to make some sense.

The sense of the words are now understood by the other persons view of the world and the filters that they use to understand information and then these understandings are then expressed as thoughts.

So, if communication is so easy how come confusion, misunderstandings and miscommunication happen all too often?

If we look at the two diagrams once more, we can see that there are two "THOUGHTS" processes – one at the beginning of the cycle with the communicator and one at the end of the cycle with the receiver of the communication.

**EVERYTHING INBETWEEN THESE TWO PROCESSES ARE INDEED PROCESSED IN DIFFERENT WAYS BY EVERY PERSON**

**AND THIS IS WHERE MISCOMMUNICATION COMES FROM!**

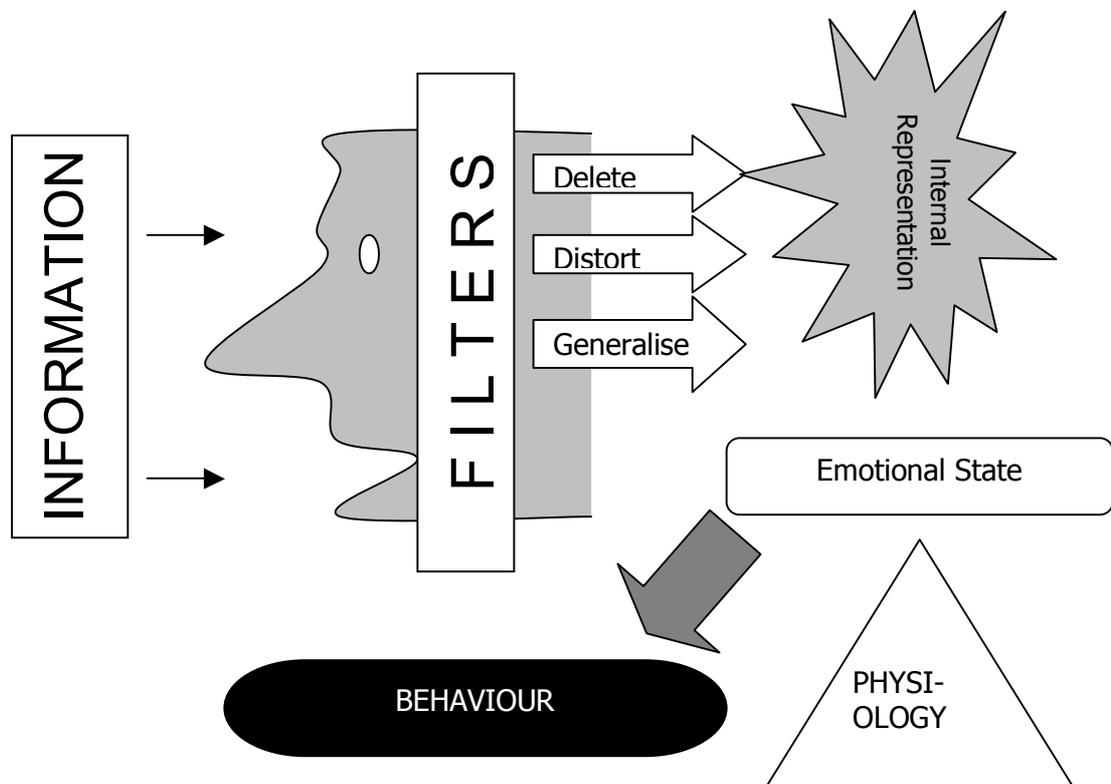
**Let's have a look to see how this is done.**

When someone communicates information to us (through one of the senses), this information has to pass through an internal filter system, which is basically how we see the world. (There is a detailed section on this later)

We then **REPRESENT** this information based upon our filters.

The way that we are feeling at the time, i.e. are we Motivated? Energised? Depressed? Pleased? Will have a coupling effect with the representation that we have just made to create an emotional state.

This state, whether good, bad or indifferent will determine our reaction to others and the event. This ultimately leads to the behaviour that others see when we communicate back whether it is through verbal or non-verbal methods.



## **Communicating effectively is all about understanding this process.**

Once you know some of the communicating strategies of the other person and you adopt your style to compliment their strategies you will find that you will communicate so much more effectively.

# **FILTER SYSTEMS**

**As we mentioned before, information comes in through our sensory input channels.**

There are 5 in all but in the context of communication the 3 main channels are:

## **Visual**

This is what we see and the body language and physiology of others

## **Auditory**

These are the sounds we hear, the words spoken and the way that these are spoken

## **Kinaesthetic**

These are split into Internal and external feelings.

External feelings include touching someone or something, what it feels like – texture, pressure etc.

Internal feelings include feelings like hunger, stress, tension, comfort, pleasure etc

The other 2, which are less significant when it comes to communication, are:

## **Olfactory**

The sense of smell

## **Gustatory**

The sense of taste

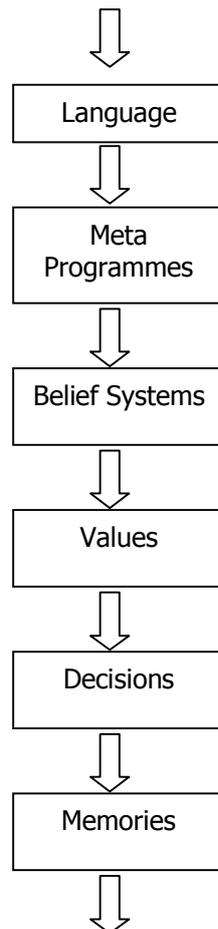
## Information In – Information Out

When information comes in through one of the senses we then process this information as described in the previous chapter – we modify it as we relate it to our view and understanding of the world.

**This understanding is based upon our filters.**

### The are 6 main filters:

INFORMATION IN



**INFORMATION OUT**

### Language

We interpret words depending on whether we understand them in the first place and our previous experience of using them.

For some people, let's say, the term "Outstanding" could mean the same as another persons "Good".

Ask 100 people in a room what "Competitive Advantage" means and you're likely to get 30-40 different answers depending on the persons personal experience with that word and their understanding of what it means.

## **Meta programmes**

**Meta programmes are at the hub of your personality and these describe the ways that you analyse a situation and information.**

When you know a persons meta programmes you will then be able to predict their behaviour and actions a lot better.

There are no right or wrong meta programmes it's just the way we handle information.

As these are so important to effective communications I have included a special chapter to learn these in greater detail.

## **Values**

The third filter is values.

This is your standards or evaluation filter.

Values are our attractions or repulsion's in life. They are all about what is important and what is good or bad for us. Because values are about things that are important to us, they have a great impact on our motivation.

## **Beliefs**

A belief is a feeling of certainty of what something means to us.

All human behaviour is belief driven.

Beliefs are the presuppositions that we have about the way the world is.

Depending upon what they are can either create or destroy our own personal power to do something.

Beliefs are essentially our on/off switch for our ability to do anything in the world.

There's an old saying that "Whether you believe you can or you cannot, you're absolutely right"

When communicating to someone it is important to elicit their beliefs of WHY they have done what they have done. On the flip side, when motivating someone, you might also want to find out the disempowering beliefs that have stopped him or her from doing what they want to do.

## Memories

This filter is all about our recollection of past events.

If someone is saying something to us and we have done it in the past we are going to make a connection.

And if that same something resulted in a negative experience, we may have built up a negative belief that it will happen again!

## Decisions

The final filter is linked closely to memories and is about the decisions that we have made in the past.

If we have made some good, bad or indifferent decisions in the past we may have created some empowering or disempowering beliefs either about the decision itself or the outcome.

## Information Out

Once the information has been filtered through, the information is then either deleted, distorted or generalised.

We **delete** certain pieces of information when we only pay attention to certain aspects of our experiences and not others.

We **distort** information when we make misrepresentations of reality.

I'm sure we have all seen a ghost's face on the bedroom wall in the middle of the night. Or because the bushes in the garden are rustling, there must be burglars down there!

We **generalise** information when we draw broad conclusions about what something means.

For example, if a woman has had a particularly bad relationship with a man she may say that "All men are the same" and never want to get into a relationship for a long time.

She has therefore taken one experience and made a generalisation out of it.

**\* EXERCISE \***

**APPRECIATING YOUR OWN VALUES AND THOSE OF OTHERS**

**Part 1:**

I'd like you to write down all of your values.

For example what things do you like to experience and have? Success?  
Freedom? Adventure? Security?

Then I'd like you to write a list of the things you want to avoid? Rejection?  
Pain? Failure? Boredom? etc

Firstly, I'd like you to look at your two lists and see if there are any  
conflicting values.

For example, if you've put down success as a value that you want  
experience and you've put down avoiding failure as something you want  
to avoid then this is a conflicting value.

On your way to success to you will fail, so the question you must ask  
yourself, id are you prepared to take the risk?

Which of your values is more stronger? The one to achieve success or the  
one to avoid failure?

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!**

**Part 2:**

Partner up with a friend or spouse and go through your lists of values  
together.

Have you got any conflicting values?

Do you like adventure, but they like security?

Do you like to strive for success, but they like comfort?

Write down you differences and make a list of the possible barriers to  
communication that you may have

## **HOW MISCOMMUNICATION OCCURS**

**Miscommunication occurs when we delete, distort and generalise information from the outside as well as our own thought process.**

Our every experience is something that we literally make up inside our heads. We do not experience reality directly, since we are always deleting, distorting and generalising.

Let's just recap once more on how we react and respond to any piece of information.

We receive information via one of our senses.

Our filters then determine our internal representation of that event.

It is our internal representation that puts us in a certain state and this in turn creates our physiology.

The state in which we find ourselves, will determine our behaviour or reaction to what happens around us.

Sometimes, the extent of our deletion, distortion and generalisation causes our version of reality to be sufficiently different to other people's for misunderstanding, or even conflict to occur.

# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

**So far we have looked at the communications process and how miscommunications can occur.**

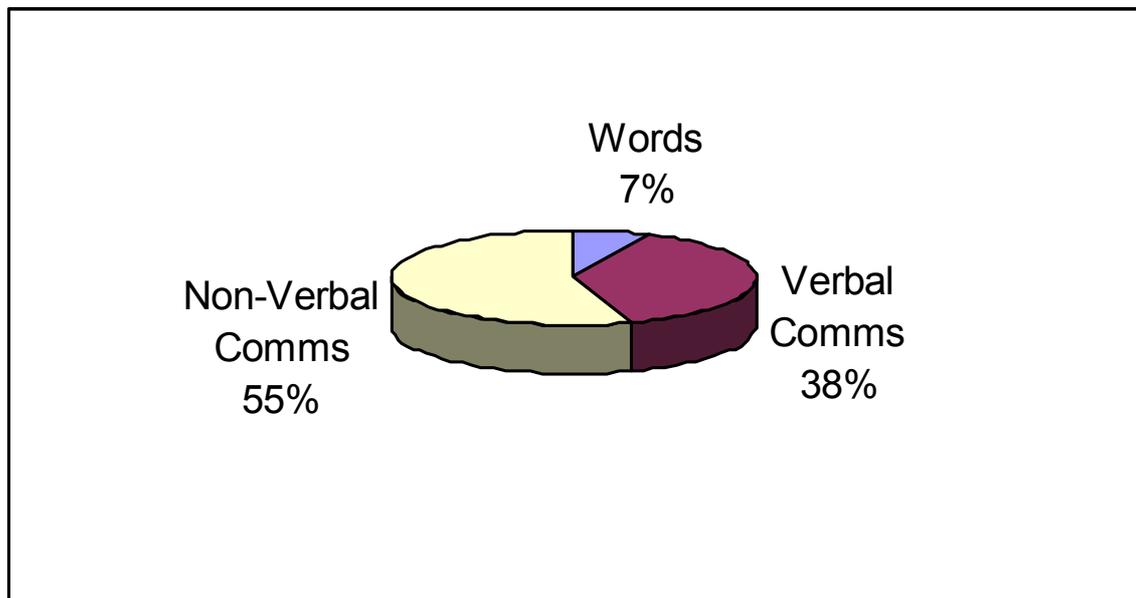
A study at the University of Pennsylvania in 1970 questioned students on their ability to understand information depending on the deliver of that communication.

From that study they produced a well know diagram that illustrates what is the composition of typical face to face communications.

7% of what we communicate is the results of the words that we say, or the content of the communication

38% of our communication to others is a result of **VERBAL** behaviour. This includes the tonality of our voice, tempo, pitch, volume etc

55% of our communication to others is a result of our **NON-VERBAL** communication to others. Our body language is so important it makes up over half of the composition of successful communications. Examples include facial expressions, posture, breathing, moving etc.



## **Learning points so far and some rules for EFFECTIVE communications**

### **1. The other persons model of the world is different to our own**

You should respect the other person's model of the world because to him or her it's the way that they see it just as you have your own conclusions and beliefs.

### **2. Physiology and the state of the mind**

The way that you are moving your body and your posture will have an affect on the way that you are thinking and the way that you are thinking will have an affect on your physiology.

### **3. There are no failures only outcomes**

Just like everything in life no matter what you intended by your communication, there will be an outcome and that will come through the response you get from the other person. Whatever interpretation they have made will be true for them.

### **4. Learn from feedback and modify your approach**

Look at the outcomes that you are getting from your communications and modify your approach. Use the results of communication as feedback and learn from it all the time. When your observations or feedback indicates that the results are not what you intended, do something else.

### **5. A person behaves the way they do, because they just do**

Remember that a person behaves the way that they do because it fits in with their values. If we cannot understand why someone behaved in such a way then what we are saying is that we do not understand his or her values.

### **6. Behaviour is the result of the thinking process and emotional state**

Behaviour is not the person; you need to look beyond the behaviour at the beliefs, values and other things that make up the identity of that person.

### **7. Flexibility is key**

A person utilising a flexible approach to communication will ensure that a less flexible person is usually responding to them. This is important when influencing another person

### **8. Use the ultimate success formula to get what you want**

To formulate the outcome that you desire you should first decide what it is that you want, how you are going to achieve it, execute the plan, work out what is working and what isn't and if necessary change your approach.

# THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS FORMULA

**The ultimate success formula should form the basis for everything that you do in life where you need a desired outcome.**

It may look like common sense to you but unfortunately, common sense is not common!

- 1. Know your outcome**
- 2. Know the compelling reasons why you need that outcome**
- 3. Plan out how you are going to achieve it**
- 4. See what is working and what is not working**
- 5. Modify your approach until it does work**

So, with regards to communications, when you need to communicate anything to anyone you should go down this list beforehand and do some preparation.

Here are some questions that you should ask yourself in the action planning stage?

What are this person's values and beliefs? How can I use these to communicate more effectively with this person?

What body language should I use? What is this person like? Full of energy? A go-getter?  
Or is this person more shy and timid? How will I have to change my approach to make them feel comfortable and receptive to what I am going to communicate?

How will I know when I have got my desired outcome?

**\* EXERCISE \***

## **USING THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS FORMULA**

Based upon what you have learned so far:

Think of an important communication that you need to make.

Follow the ULTIMATE SUCCESS FORMULA to plan out your communication with this person.

We will come back to this exercise later in the course

# **META PROGRAMMES**

**As we mentioned in a previous chapter meta programmes are an internal filter that we pass information through.**

They are specifically related to the way that we sort and categorise information.

Knowing someone's meta programmes allows you to predict their actions but please note that there are no right or wrong meta programmes.

There are many meta programmes but let's go through the top 6 that are used in everyday and business contexts.

- **Towards/Away**
- **Frame of Reference**
- **Sameness/Difference**
- **Reason**
- **Chunk Size**
- **Convincer**

## **TOWARDS/AWAY**

Towards people are always striving to achieve an outcome.

They always want to move towards something.

They want to achieve a certain outcome or goal and find it difficult to recognise what should be avoided. Instead they concentrate and focus on what they will get when the outcome is achieved.

Other the other hand, Away from people do things because they want to avoid a certain situation. They don't want to experience loss or discomfort and want to move away from something.

Question? How do you know what type of person they are?

Answer - Ask them this type of question:

What do you want? What will having xyz give you? What do you want in xyz?

### **What their response will tell you:**

Toward people will tell you what they want.

Away from people will tell you what they don't want.

### **Using this in the real world:**

How to communicate to people who have a TOWARDS and AWAY FROM strategy.

### **In Negotiations with these people:**

Towards

Work out what the goals are and what you can do to help achieve these goals. Focus on the outcome and what it will give you.

Away

Work out what you can do to help them avoid what they don't want. Work out and anticipate potential problems and assure them that these can be minimised or avoided.

### **In Managing these people:**

Towards

Offer incentives, i.e an outcome. Emphasis goals and what they can achieve and attain.

Away

Use sanctions. Be aware that these people are usually the ones to bring up problems.

### **Influencing Language**

Towards

Get, achieve, attain, include, obtain, have, wants

Away

Not have, avoid, don't want, keep away from, get rid of,

## **FRAME OF REFERENCE**

The second major meta programme is your frame of reference.

This is all about how people evaluate things and can be split out into two:

- **Internal People**
- **External People**

Internal People evaluate on the basis of what they think is appropriate. They make all of the decisions themselves and can have difficulty in accepting other people's feedback and direction.

External People evaluate on the basis of what other people think is appropriate. They need others to help guide, direct and motivate them. They cannot decide for themselves that they need external references.

Question? How do you know what type of person they are?

Answer - Ask them this type of question:

How do you know that you have done a good job? How do you know that .....?

### **What their response will tell you:**

Internal people will tell you that they decide when they've done a good job.

External people tell you that they know because other people or outside information sources tell them.

### **Using this in the real world:**

#### ***In Negotiations with these people:***

Internal

Emphasise to the person that they will know inside that you are right. Say that they have to decide. Don't bother about external factors or what other people think, they will not be interested in this.

External

Emphasise what others think. Give them data and information to back things up. Give them feedback and reassurance.

### ***In Managing these people:***

Internal

These people have difficulty in accepted feedback or praise. They like to decide for themselves and don't like to be told what to do. They do best when they have little or no supervision.

External

These people need close management. They need constant feedback and re-assurance about how well they are doing. They need to be told what to do, how to do it and how well they are doing it.

### **Influencing language**

Internal

You know best, you'll know when it's right, only you can decide, it's up to you

External

Can I give you some feedback, I will let you know, the facts show, other people think that,

## SAMENESS/DIFFERENCE

This meta programme is all about people's perceptions of likeness and differences.

### **There are 4 main categories with this:**

**Sameness People** will notice those things that are the same or match their previous experiences. They dislike change.

**Sameness with exception** people will first notice the similarities and will then notice the differences. They prefer slow or gradual change.

**Difference with exception** people will notice the differences and then the similarities. They like change and variety.

**Difference people** will notice those things that are different. They love change and want it all of the time.

Question? How do you know what type of person they are?

Answer - Ask them this type of question:

What is the relationship between these three objects? What is the relationship between this X and a previous Y?

### **What their response will tell you:**

Sameness People will tell you how things are the same.

Sameness with exception people will tell you first how things are similar, then tell you what differences may be.

Difference with exception people will tell you first how things are different and then the similarities.

Difference people will tell you what the differences are.

### **Using this in the real world:**

#### ***In Negotiations with these people:***

Sameness

Stress areas of agreement. Do not discuss differences. Discuss areas of similarities, how you both want the same thing.

Sameness with exception

First stress similarities and then point out the differences. Talk about change as a gradual slow process.

Difference with exception

First stress how things are different and only then talk about similarities.  
Focus on change and new solutions

Difference

Stress how things are totally different. Do not mention similarities. Talk in terms of massive change and revolutionary.

***In Managing these people:***

Sameness

Don't talk about variety. Talk about continuity. Have them do things the same way.

Sameness with exception

Talk about gradual improvements. Make change a gradual process. Have them do the same things but with gradual improvements and changes

Difference with exception

Emphasis improvements and changes and downplay commonality. Stress different ways to do the job and make changes frequently.

Difference

Talk about the differences. Have them do something new all the time. These people will get bored at repetitive tasks.

**Influencing language**

Sameness

Same, same as, maintain, keep doing, in common, keep the same, usual

Sameness with exception

Better, more, less, gradual, although, but, same except.

Difference with exception

Different, new, changed, change, unusual,

Difference

Different, new, radical, unique, revolutionary,

## **REASON**

The reason meta programme is all about peoples opinions towards making choices, developing options and following procedures.

Options People are very good at developing choices. They want to experiment and are therefore poor at following rules. They are very good at making improvements and developing new procedures or alternatives to old ones.

Procedures people are good at following procedures, but they do not know how to generate them. When they have not got a procedure to follow, they become stuck.

Question? How do you know what type of person they are?

Answer - Ask them this type of question:

Why did you choose xyz?

### **What their response will tell you:**

Options people will give you the reasons why they did it.

Procedures people will tell you a story about how they came to do what they did. They don't talk about choices or options. They give you the impression that they don't have choices.

### **Using this in the real world:**

#### ***In Negotiations with these people:***

Options People

Concentrate on the choices and possibilities. Discuss all the options. Do not follow a fixed procedure for the negotiation.

Procedures People

Lay out a procedure for the negotiation. Don't provide them with options or choices and don't expect them to decide on alternatives.

#### ***In Managing these people:***

Options People

Talk about the possibilities and alternatives. Tell them to think of new ways. Do not expect them to follow routines. Make sure that they do not violate procedures

Procedures People

Stress the procedures to do the work. Make sure there are procedures in place and that the person understands them. Be prepared to assist if the procedure fails.

### **Influencing Language**

Options

Alternatives, reasons, options, choices, possibilities

Procedures

Correct way, procedure, known way, right way, proven way,

## **CHUNK SIZE**

People can be categorised into two when it comes down to details.

They are either a detailed person (specific person) or they prefer large chunks of information (global person).

Specific People give you all the small details. They like to understand and go into pieces of work with the minutest of detail.

Global People like to talk in big pictures and are not detailed at all. They are conceptual and abstract. They give you the overall framework or brief of what is happening rather than going into details.

You know when someone is specific and when someone is global just by asking them any question!

### **What their response will tell you:**

Specific people will give you all the details and go to great lengths to explain everything. They give you more and more detail when you ask questions. Specific people become frustrated with Global People because there is no detail in what they say.

Global People give you an overview without details. They tend to use large generalisations. Global People become frustrated with Specific People because they go into far too much detail

### **Using this in the real world:**

#### ***In Negotiations with these people:***

Specific

Avoid generalisations and vagueness. Break things down into the detail and be specific. Present things in logical sequences.

Global

Avoid details and present the bigger picture.

#### ***In Managing these people:***

Specific

Tell the person in detail what needs to be done and ensure that there is a logical sequence. Do not expect them to think about the bigger picture

Global

Skip the details and tell the person a broad overview. Tell them what the end game is and then let them fill in the rest.

## **Influencing language**

Specific

Next, then, precisely, exactly, specifically, first, second, details,

Global

Big picture, framework, in brief, result, generally, overview

## **CONVINCER**

People make decisions and are convinced for only one of four reasons:

It looks right  
It feels right  
It sounds right  
It makes sense

Question? How do you know what type of person they are?

Answer - Ask them this type of question:

Why did you decide xyz?

### **What their response will tell you:**

Looks right people do things because the representation that they make to themselves is a picture that literally looks right. They will use visual words when describing their decision

Feel right people do things because the representation they make to themselves is a sensation in some part of their body which literally feels right. They use kinaesthetic words when describing their decision

Sounds right people do things because the representation they make to themselves is a series of words which literally sounds right to them. They will use auditory words when describing their decision

Makes sense people do things because the representation they make to themselves is based on logic which in their own mind they know is correct. They will use auditory words when describing their decision and they will use facts, data and reason.

### **Using this in the real world:**

#### ***In Negotiations with these people:***

Use the appropriate language patterns that match their decision process. If providing learning materials make sure it is appropriate for that person – i.e pictures, diagrams, facts, data etc

#### ***In Managing these people:***

Looks right

Paint a picture in words for them. Draw a picture to explain things. Let them imagine something. Show them how to do it.

Feels right

Have them internally sense what they have to do. Let them get their hands on the task under supervision and touch, feel and experience what needs to be done

Sounds right

Have them describe to themselves in internal dialogue in an appropriate tone of voice what they are supposed to do. Tell them things. Tell them what others say.

Makes sense

Give them reasons for what you want them to do. Let them read instructions on how to do the job. Give them facts, statistics and data.

### **Influencing language**

Appropriate to how they make their decisions. (We are going to look into this in greater detail in the next chapter)

## **\* EXERCISE \***

### **ELICITING META-PROGRAMMES**

#### **Part 1:**

Now that you have seen what makes up each of the Meta programmes, what preferences do you have?

Take time out and have a read through each again and write down below what your own Meta programmes are for your self-awareness and why?

- Towards/Away
- Frame of Reference
- Sameness/Difference
- Reason
- Chunk Size
- Convincer

#### **Part 2:**

Listen up next time you have a conversation with anyone.

Elicit their Meta programmes by asking the relevant questions – you know what they are!

After you think you have got their preference for each Meta programme, please provide feedback to each other on what they are and what you each said.

## **INTERNAL REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEMS**

We have already talked about making internal representations in previous chapters and the meta programme called CONVINCER describes the way that people think and what they base their decisions on.

We have also described that information comes in one of 5 main senses as well.

Well, it is now time to put all of this together by recognising the thinking process of a person by listening to the verbal indicators that they use in everyday speech and then using this information to tailor the way that we communicate to them.

Remember, people like people who are like themselves!

For example if we meet someone who makes decisions because "It looks right" and uses mainly visual indicators, we will find it easier to communicate to and explain things to that person if we show him a diagram or by painting him a picture in his minds eye.

So below is a list of indicators of the words that people use for the 3 main modalities:

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic	Unspecified
See	Hear	Feel	Sense
Look	Listen	Touch	Experience
View	Sounds	Grasp	Understand
Appear	Make music	Get hold of	Think
Show	Harmonise	Slip through	Learn
Dawn	Tune in/out	Catch on	Process
Reveal	Be all ears	Tap into	Decide
Envision	Rings a bell	Make contact	Motivate
Illuminate	Silence	Throw out	Consider
Imagine	Be heard	Turn around	Change
Clear	Resonate	Hard	Perceive
Foggy	Deaf	Unfeeling	Insensitive
Focussed	Mellifluous	Concrete	Distinct
Hazy	Dissonance	Get a handle	Know
Picture	Unhearing	Solid	

Below is a list of indicator phrases that people use, which ones do you use most often?

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic
An eyeful	Afterthought	All washed up
Appears to me	Blabbermouth	Boils down to
Beyond a shadow of a doubt	Call on	Chip off the old block
Birds eye view	Clear as a bell	Come to grips with
Catch a glimpse of	Clearly expressed	Control yourself
Clear cut	Describe in detail	Cool/calm/collected
Dim view	Earful	Firm foundations
Flashed on	Enquire into	Get a handle on
Get a perspective on	Give me your ear	Get a load of this
Get a scope on	Give you a call	Get in touch with
Hazy idea	Given amount of	Get the drift of
In light of	Grant an audience	Get your back up
In person	Heard voices	Hand in hand
In view of	Hidden message	Hand in there
Looks like	Hold your tongue	Heated argument
Make a scene	Ideal talk	Hold it
Mental image	Key note speaker	Hold on
Mental picture	Loud and clear	Hot head
Minds eye	Manner of speaking	Keep your shirt on
Naked eye	Pay attention to	Lay cards on the table
Paint a picture	Power of speech	Pain in the neck
See to it	State your purpose	Pull some strings
Short sighted	To tell the truth	Sharp as a tack
Showing off	Tongue-tied	Slipped my mind
Sight for sore eyes	Tuned in/tuned out	Smooth operator
Staring off into space	Unheard of	So-so
Take a peak	Utterly	Start from scratch
Tunnel vision	Voiced an opinion	Stuff upper lip
Under your nose	Well informed	Stuffed shirt
Up front	Within hearing	Too much hassle
Well defined	Word for word	Topsy turvey

**\* EXERCISE \***

### **YOUR REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEM**

What words do you use the most?

How do you think?

How would you best learn new material? By a diagram? Listening? Doing and feeling? What category do you fit into the most?

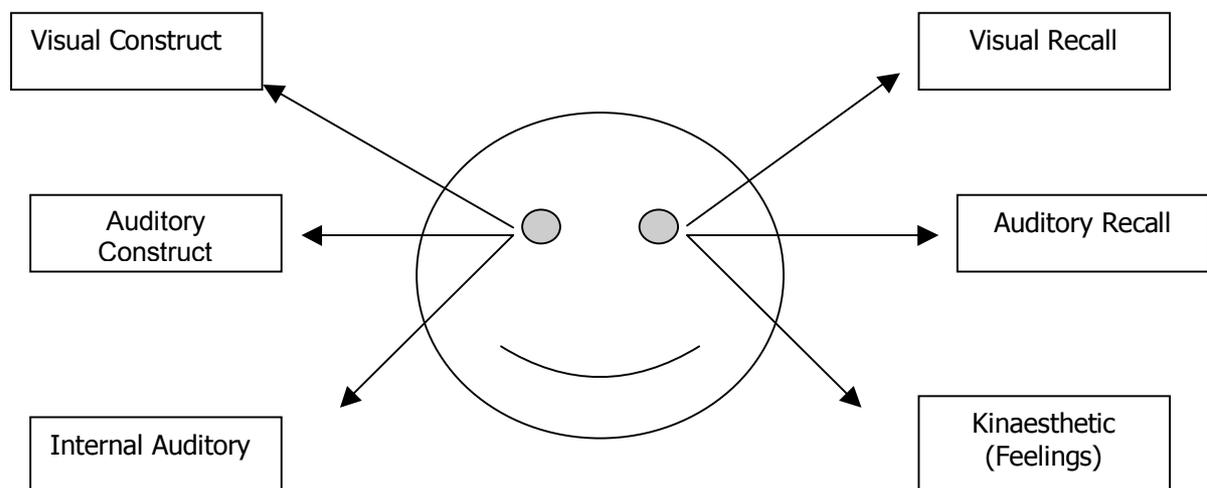
## ELICITING THINKING PATTERNS THROUGH EYE MOVEMENT

In the late seventies and early eighties researchers discovered that people move their eyes in a certain way when they think.

Students were asked a series of questions and the researchers noticed that their eye movements, when thinking, followed a structured pattern.

They realised that by looking at someone's eyes, you could tell HOW they think.

You can tell the way they are constructing their thoughts.



The above picture is how the person looks when you are facing them.

There is a basic rule that says when:

People are looking up – They are visualising

People look horizontally to the left and right – They are remembering or constructing sounds

People look down and to their left – They are accessing their feelings.

People look down and to the right – They are talking to themselves

## **Visual Recall**

This is when you are seeing images from the past. You are recalling them from memory and are things that you have seen before.

Questions to ask?

"What did your curtains look like when you were a teenager?"

"What does your car look like?"

## **Visual Construct**

When you are visualising something you have never seen before or you are making something up in your head you are using visual construct.

Sometimes you can use this one to see if people are lying to you!

Questions to ask?

"What would your car look like if it had a soft top?"

"What would your house look like if it were painted red?"

What would you look like if you lost 3 stone in weight?"

## **Auditory Recall**

This is when you remember sounds or voices that you have heard before or things that you have said to yourself before.

When you ask someone "What was the last thing I said?" they normally look in that direction.

Questions to ask?

"Can you remember the sound of your father's voice?"

"Can you remember what you said to yourself when you did that?"

"What was the last thing I said?"

## **Auditory Construct**

This is when you are making sounds up that you have never heard before.

Questions to ask?

"What would the national anthem sound like if it were played on the flute?"

"What would I sound like if I were fluent in Spanish?"

## **Kinaesthetic**

When you are accessing your feelings you tend to look in this direction.

Questions to ask?

"What does it feel like to touch this sand paper?"

"What does it feel like to be so popular?"

## **Internal Auditory**

This is where your eyes go when you are having internal dialogue and talking to yourself.

Questions to ask?

"Can you go over in your mind – All I need is within me now"

"Can you recite to yourself 'Three Lions'"

We can elicit someone's strategy then by listening to the words that they use and how they move their eyes.

In order to communicate effectively we need to absorb these action signals and then modify our behaviour, physiology and the words that we use to best mirror and match their preferred learning and thinking style.

After all, communication is all about rapport building – it is a relationship between two or more people.

# BUILDING MEGA RAPPORT

Rapport is the ultimate tool for producing results with other people and thus it is so vital for effective communications.

Whether you know the person or not, there are 6 main steps to establishing rapport with anyone.

When you bear in mind that 93% of all communication is down to the tonality of your voice and your body language, building rapport is far more than just talking about common experiences.

It's an important point to remember but people like people when they are like themselves and when they are not it so much more difficult to have any sort of relationship with that person never mind an effective one!

Have you ever had times in your past when building rapport was so easy?

I bet you've also had times when you thought, "Oh, what am I going to do and say next?"

We have all been there!

We have also all been there when you've wanted to be quiet and relaxed when all of a sudden a friend or colleague comes jumping in and full of energy, wanting to talk your head off? How did you feel?

I bet there have also been times when you've been full of energy and the other person wants to relax! You go arrggghhhh!

Ok, so let's get to the 6 things you need to do to build rapport.

## **1. Match the persons sensory modality**

What I mean here is to match and mirror the way that they think and talk.

Remember when we were talking about visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modalities?

Well, this is about putting it into practice.

Listen for the indicator words that the person is using and use words/phrases from the same modality.

Also, look out for eye movements to spot thinking patterns.

## **2. Mirror the persons Physiology**

By copying the persons posture, facial expressions, hand gestures, movements and even their eye blinking, will cause their body to say unconsciously to their mind that this person is like me!

## **3. Matching their voice**

You should match the tone, tempo, timbre and the volume of the person's voice.

You should also make use of matching the key words that they use a lot.

Examples of this may be: "Alright", "Actually", "You know what I mean"

## **4. Matching their breathing**

You should match the persons breathing to the same pace. Matching the in and out breath.

## **5. Matching how they deal with information**

You should match persons CHUNK SIZE of how they deal with information.

For example are they detailed or do they talk and think in big pictures.

If you get this wrong you will find it very difficult indeed to build rapport as the detailed person will be yearning for more information and the big picture person will soon be yawning!

## **6. Matching common experiences**

After all, what are you going to talk about!

This is all about finding some commonality to talk about. Matching experiences, interests, backgrounds, values and beliefs.

One point to bare in mind is that you need to be subtle when you are matching and mirroring. Don't go over the top!

Typically however, the other person will be focussing so much on what they have to say that they will not even notice.

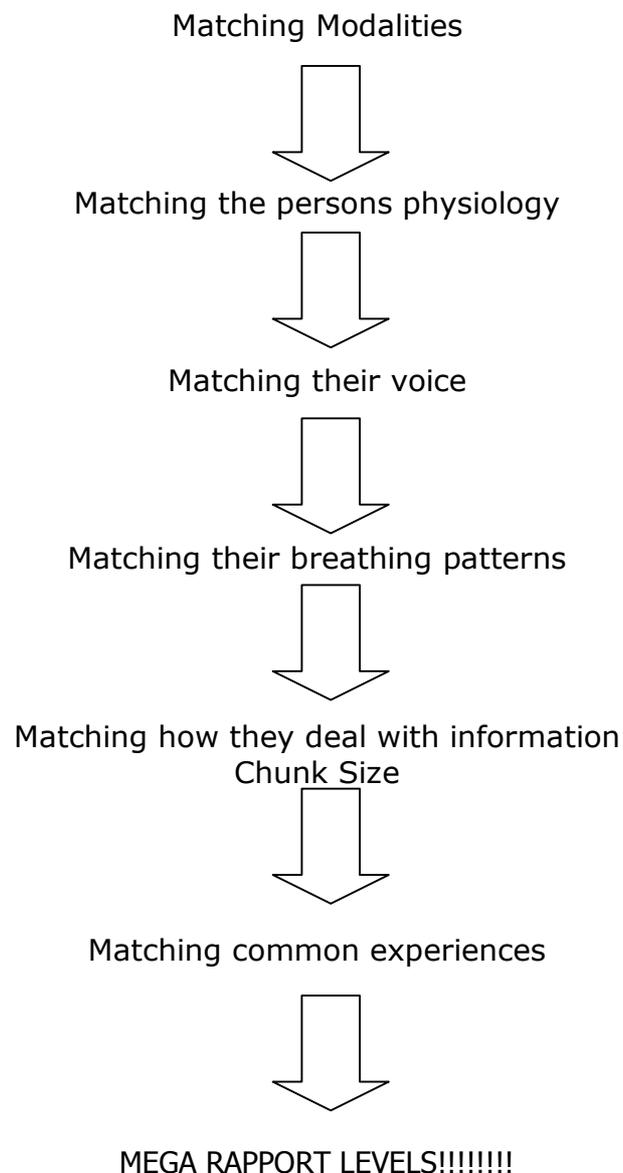
Calibration is one way of determining whether you are in rapport with someone.

This basically means that you need to develop your ability to notice to such an extent that you can begin to see people's reactions to communications.

If the person seems to be comfortable with what you are doing, more than likely you are building rapport.

Look at for their eye movement, the muscles around the eyes, their lip movement, and twitches or changes in breathing.

Increasing levels of rapport



# HOW TO SPEAK UP AT MEETINGS

Develop the confidence to speak up at meetings

Are you generally quiet at meetings? Do you tend to observe what's going on, but hesitate to get involved?

I bet you've gone through the following scenario a hundred times:

There you are in the meeting, listening attentively trying so desperately to contribute to the conversations that are taking place.

The person with the biggest mouth is having his or her say, the same old people are talking.

Then "POW! ZAP!" you have a great idea or have a really valuable thing to say but you don't.

You're too scared. You are frightened that the idea is going to be rubbish or that it is too obvious.

You decide to say nothing!

Then, all of a sudden, as if someone has read your mind, another person comes out with exactly what you were thinking and takes all kinds of credit for it!

"That could and should have been me!" you think and then your confidence takes a massive blow.

I heard a great quote that went:

**"People would rather say nothing and let people think they are stupid rather than open their mouth and remove any doubt"**

The first thing you should think to yourself is that you are at the meeting for a reason.

That reason is to take in information as well as share information yourself.

## **Exercise**

I'd like you to write down a list of all of the times when you have thought of something to say in a meeting but didn't.

I bet it will be a long list!

Now, just think of all of the plaudits and credit you COULD have got if only you had opened your mouth.

Next to each item write down how it would have made you feel if you would have said it.

What credit would you have got for it?

How does it make you feel now that you have written all of this down?

Confidence starts with making small changes and then making them a habit.

### **Next time**

Before you go into your next meeting I want you to go over the list you have written during this exercise.

Get psyched up to make a telling contribution at this meeting but don't beat yourself up if you don't have any ideas.

Sometimes, you don't have anything to say and that's ok.

Where I am coming from here is if you HAVE got something to say and DON'T!

Make a decision to say the first idea that you have and see what happens.

At the end of the day, you have got nothing to lose and people will probably feel better towards you if you say something rather than if you say nothing at all.

Success breeds success and confidence breeds confidence.

Remember, give it a go - you will be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is and then you will be wondering about what all of the fuss was about!

The next time will then be a synch!

### **10 reasons why you can and should confidently speak up at meetings.**

Let me give you 10 reasons why you can, and should speak up at meetings:

1. The team needs you every individual on a team has a role to play, something to contribute-even if it's just to play devil's advocate-you included
2. You're breathing-that means you have an opinion - so share it
3. The constant talkers need a break don't you think?
4. The facilitator might be battling with whether or not to invite you into the conversation - let her know you're present and paying attention
5. A good facilitator will call on those who are not contributing as much in an effort to get everyone involved anyway - it might as well be a moment you choose to get involved
6. The meeting will go faster

7. It's good for your career
8. It's good for you
9. In preparation for the meeting, outline 3 things you want to say
10. You're a brilliant individual, so why not share your brilliance with others!

# HOW TO RUN MEETINGS

## Run Meetings Confidently

Effectively run meetings enable managers to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time, with the added benefit of group involvement and buy-in.

This article highlights a few things to consider as you prepare to confidently run your meeting.

Running meetings can be time-consuming if they lack focus, the right members, or effective facilitation tools.

On the other hand, they can also be an extremely efficient way to get things done quickly, to support building a team environment, and to enable collaboration among key people to produce a better outcome than possible working independently.

If you are responsible for running meetings, and aren't quite sure how best to go about creating an effective meeting experience, you'll be glad you found this article.

Following are a few key steps to successful meeting management.

Attending to each of these steps will enable you to repeatedly create a well-organized productive experience, and therefore build your confidence that you can run effective meetings.

### **1. Meet with a purpose**

If you ask most people, they have been to one too many meetings that seemed (whether or not accurately so) to have no purpose.

Be sure to call a meeting only if you have a clear reason for doing so. It doesn't matter what your reason might be.

If you need information from the group, set a clear agenda with key questions ahead of time.

If you want to share information, draft an outline of your key points. If you just want to get the team together to allow for bonding time, then organize it so that an interactive environment will be facilitated (order pizza, etc.)

### **2. Communicate your purpose/agenda**

So, you know why you're meeting-great!

Now, tell everyone else why you are! Be sure to let all attendees know how long the meeting will be, where it will be, and what information is to be covered.

Be sure to let them also know what the goal of the meeting is-what deliverables, outcomes, etc. are expected so they can come prepared.

Just because you've called the meeting doesn't mean you're the only one who has to do the talking.

Enable them to participate-sharing relevant information ahead of time, will ensure they come prepared to contribute, and take the spotlight off of you at the same time!

### **3. Supporting materials**

Come prepared with the appropriate supporting materials.

If this is an information gathering session, bring forms or tools for completion. Presentation? Bring slides/handouts, etc.

Whatever will support communication of your key points, gathering of the required information, or structuring of the discussion should be included to create a stronger sense that everyone's time is being well spent.

### **4. Everyone present for a purpose**

Please ensure that every single individual invited to the meeting is there for a reason. And, more importantly, that each attendee clearly understands his/her specific role.

When planning your meeting consider team members' roles.

How can they contribute?

Do they have key information, skills, experience that you can leverage in the meeting?

Help them feel useful by letting them know the important role you'd like them to play.

Also helpful in running effective meetings, is to assign meeting management roles before you begin the meetings. Some specific meeting facilitation roles might include:

- Scribe: to record key information, and meeting minutes
- Flipchart recorder: to capture key points, questions visually on flipcharts
- Timekeeper: to help keep to the agenda
- "Devil's advocate": should the group tend to always passively agree to all suggestions, it might be helpful (and fun) to assign someone to play devil's advocate purely for the purpose of creating creative debate and discussion.

## **5. Outcomes/agreements captured and reviewed**

Before you end the meeting, review the agreed upon action items, along with the responsible parties for each item as discussed during the meeting.

If you've assigned meeting scribes or flipchart recorders, then this step should be relatively simple.

## **6. Next steps defined**

Discuss roundabout timeframes for completion of action items, and also make sure to review next steps.

Set expectations now for a follow-up meeting, should one be required.

Let everyone know what you anticipate will need to be covered in the next meeting.

## **7. Show your appreciation**

Every single person's time is precious.

So, be sure to thank them for their participation and contributions. Motivate key participants by letting them know after the meeting just how helpful their contributions were during the meeting.

This will help to ensure that next time you need to have a meeting, you'll find willing participants ready to go.

## **8. Reflect on your process**

Identify what went well, and what didn't.

Learn from your experience and find ways to improve as you move forward. Don't forget to seek support from your Human Resources Training group should you be interested in building your facilitation skills.

**Following these 8 steps will ensure that with practice, you will be effectively, and smoothly running meetings-with confidence!**

# PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

Speak in Public with Confidence and Enjoyment

Speaking in public, in front of groups and conducting presentations are commonly agreed as the least favourite activities that anyone can perform.

However, if we are well prepared, well equipped and well supported, you will find that speaking in public really can be quite enjoyable - honest!

Here are some ways to make public speaking an enjoyable experience both for yourself, as well as for your audience.

Following are some ways YOU can make speaking in public an enjoyable experience:

## **1. As much as possible/appropriate, include your audience**

You don't always have to be the talking head at a meeting.

Prepare questions in advance that will encourage the audience to participate.

Consider your audience in advance-Who are they?

What might their histories and/or interests be?

Prepare opportunities in your presentation/speech for audience participation.

## **2. Inject appropriate humour in your delivery**

It will do you good, enabling you to lighten up and release any tension.

It will also enable the audience to loosen up, pay more attention, and receive you in a much more favorable way.

## **3. Share a little known fact**

Most audiences are especially grateful to hear something they haven't already heard before.

One single piece of new information can make the time spent listening completely worth their while.

If you can find one little known, yet especially relevant fact, you will have a captive audience.

## **4. Smile and the world smiles with you**

It's true!

Others can sense your discomfort, and despite any earth shattering information you have to share, your audience is apt to discount your brilliance if the delivery of your key messages isn't clear and assertive.

Instead remember to smile, make eye contact and believe your own words-and they will too.

## **5. Keep it relevant**

To the extent possible, make sure your audience is the right audience for the information you are presenting.

In other words, don't lecture on retirement options to a newly graduating class.

Know before hand what you want to say and practice until it comes naturally.

This will enable you to spend more time relating to your audience, than trying to remember what comes next in your delivery.

### **6. Create fun visuals (as appropriate)**

Some individuals will retain more if they are able to see graphic representations of the information you plan to deliver.

Consider which parts of your message can be presented visually, and remember to keep visuals simple, attractive, and large enough so everyone can see them.

Any fun, relevant clipart or comic can also be a nice perk.

### **So, what are the qualities of a good speaker?**

Here are a list of the qualities and characteristics of a good public speaker/presenter.

Make sure you include these points when you have to speak in public

1. They talk to us as though we are having a conversation
2. They speak our language
3. They look as though they are enjoying themselves.
4. They inspire us to find out more about the subject
5. They tell stories/use the human-interest angle
6. Someone who conjures up pictures in our mind
7. They don't talk for hours
8. They let us know where we are going
9. They look at us-not their notes
10. They stress important points and pause to allow ideas to sink in
11. The talk appears well prepared but has an air of spontaneity

## **The importance of body language**

Don't forget your non-verbal action signals!

You will want to look confident even though you may not be on the inside.

Don't just stand there, with your arms by the side of you!

**ACT CONFIDENTLY and you will FEEL CONFIDENT!**

Try it, it really works.

So, how do you act confidently?

- With your posture - walk tall with your head up.
- Smile
- Maintain eye contact
- Handshake
- Move around
- Gestures
- Relax

## **Speak with confidence as well.**

People will believe what they see more than what they hear, but once you look confident, you have to sound the part too!

- Breathing
- Sound quality of your voice
- Pitch
- Speed
- Tone
- Pausing
- Listening
- Use confident words

## **15 Ways to overcome your STAGE FRIGHT!**

1. Be well prepared. Rehearse several times
2. Co-operate with your body - rest, eat and sleep well beforehand
3. Dress in clothes that make you feel good
4. Take several deep breaths to relax your body
5. Concentrate on the messages you want to get over to your audience
6. Move around and release your nervous energy.
7. Visualise yourself doing well
8. Remember that your audience want you to do well
9. Think of a similar occasion in the past when you did it before and did it well. Think about it for a moment.
10. Make no negative confessions "I'm so nervous"
11. Put the situation into perspective

12. If you get nerves during your talk, move around or do something different to get into a different "state"
13. Pick out some friendly faces and make eye contact with them
14. If you make a mistake you make a mistake, laugh at it and the audience with laugh with you. Make a joke out of it.
15. The more you do it the better you will become. Practise makes perfect.

# CONFIDENT PRESENTATIONS

Giving confident and powerful presentations

You can deliver confident and powerful presentations!

All it takes is a little preparation, some practice, and a winning mindset. You've been asked to give a presentation.

Congratulations! This is your chance to shine.

If you're like most people, you probably don't like presenting very much.

So, read on for some simple tips you can use to conquer your worries.

With these simple tips, you'll be ready to go in no time, feeling confident, and fully prepared.

First, there are a few things I wanted to point out:

1. Know that you were asked to present, because you can do it-you wouldn't have been asked otherwise.
2. No one really likes presenting. Some of the best, most well known speakers and actors have confessed to this. So, when you look out at your audience, know that you're always in good company.
3. What actually comes out of your mouth is only about 10% of what gets communicated. That leaves 90% to non-verbals. That means if your body language, expression and gestures communicate confidence, you will come across as confident.

But just how do you create this confidence?

Here's the secret: being prepared; practising; and having identified beforehand, instant solutions for de-stressing.

A favourite motto of mine is "If you think you can, you can."

So here is how you're going to get prepared, confidently go in there, and knock their socks off!

## **Confidence builder #1: Know your content**

Identify your key messages-bullet them in order so they tell a clear story.

Jot down cues for your key messages (e.g. on flashcards, paper, etc.).

Have them ready as back up (but remember to refrain from reading them word-for-word while presenting).

Enhance your messages with supporting tools, and interesting visuals-it will be a perk for your audience, and it takes the spotlight off of you. Be sure to tap into your resources-know a graphic design expert? Ask for their advice.

### **Confidence builder #2: Practice makes it a "piece of cake"**

Practice delivery of your lines. Do this in the mirror.

You might feel funny talking to yourself, but it works.

Watch your body language.

Find your "confident look."

Standing straight be sure to use smooth hand gestures, and limit unnecessary movement (e.g. rocking back and forth from one foot to the other).

Practice until the words flow like water.

When you're ready, practice in front of a friend or two.

Ask them each for 3 things you did well and 1 thing you could improve.

### **Confidence builder #3: Create your "winning scene"**

Visualise yourself delivering your presentation.

Then see your audience's reaction.

What does that "winning scene" look like for you?

Visualise it over and over until you can see it so clearly, you know what colour socks your boss is wearing!

### **Confidence builder #4: Go for it!**

Identify ways to calm your nerves before you even begin: take deep breaths, or find whatever works for you (e.g. picture everyone in funny pyjamas).

Squelch any negative thoughts or concerns by envision your "winning scene."

Think positive. Remember: "If you think you can, you can."

As you present, keep eye contact with as many people as you can-this also conveys confidence.

If it helps, determine a shape in your mind and make eye contact around the room as though you were creating that shape with your line of vision.

Be sure to keep your pace SLOW!

Many of us tend to speedtalk when presenting, and so, often what might sound slow to us sounds just right to the listener.

And, because you are so well prepared you will make your points confidently, answer questions clearly, and start to look forward to your winning scene!