

A Gift of Communication!



Why A Gift of Communication?

"The problem with communication is the illusion that it has occurred!"

~George Bernard Shaw

Communication is a gift. Imagine if you couldn't communicate at all! Now imagine if your communication was Extraordinary! We are all sending and receiving a lot of messages! Isn't it Extraordinary when we hit the mark and our communication lands the way it was intended (and the intent was good!)? The truth for most of us, is that we aren't quite a 10 when it comes to communication. Sometimes we say what we are thinking, and sometimes we say things *without* thinking. Often times we talk to be heard or hear only what we want to hear. Many of us say things without regard for how it will be received. And then there are the rest of us who have the habit of making assumptions of the meaning of the message. The reality is that we live in a culture that values the freedom of communication, yet it is one area that our society has yet to master. Many of us still believe that communication is one way - talking.

At the Extraordinary Leader, we believe Communication is the key. As coaches we have the privilege of connecting with teams and individuals. Our reality is that communication is the most talked about "value" and yet the least mastered - both in organizations and in individual relationships. The lack of Extraordinary Communication can lose sales, break down business projects, diminish customer service, challenge co-worker associations, demolish self confidence, and destroy personal relationships. Conversely, when communication is Extraordinary, the results can be magical!

"The most important things are hardest to say, because words diminish them."

~Stephen King

"The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives."

~Anthony Robbins

In the pursuit of living an Extraordinary Life and being an Extraordinary Leader, this year let's escalate our awareness of Extraordinary Communication. Regardless of when you received it, we hope this gift finds a place in your life throughout the year - monthly, weekly, and daily. We invite you to consider your communication reality. Get inspired! Up the level of your awareness, set some communication goals, practice the tools, and create a new year of Extraordinary Communication!

Watch what happens!

Get Inspired!

Notice what you Notice!

Awareness, Action, Accountability

Elevate Yourself!

De-funk-i-fy!

How to use this tool...

- Decide to become a student of Extraordinary Communication
- Set some communication goals
- Review it in challenging times
- Use it as part of a communication journal
- Use it as a guideline and reference to outline a conversation
- Give it to someone else as a gift

*“Communication works for
those who work at it”
~John Powell*

Now, let's break down Extraordinary Communication into a few key areas.

Evaluate yourself on the scale and then take note of what you do well and where you know that you need improvement.

1. Intention

Do you know your intention before you begin to communicate? Is it a good one? Do you aim to improve your relationship in your conversations, or do you plan to make sure that the other person knows that you are right? Is your intention clear to the other person? Do you articulate it up front? Are you concerned with how your message *lands*?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

If you were about to begin a challenging conversation with someone, what would you say to ensure that they understand your intention?

2. Trust

What is the level of trust between you and the other person or group? How does this impact your communication? Do you demonstrate trust? Are you trusting? Are you trustworthy?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

What could you do to build trust?

*“Kindness is a language
which the deaf can hear and
the blind can see.”*

~Mark Twain

3. Listening

Do you *hear* the words or do you *listen* to the message? Do you show if you are listening? How? Do you wait for the other person to finish before you begin? Do you listen for what is not being said? Do you bring along *baggage and history* to the conversation as you listen to the other person? Are you judgmental?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

Think of a recent conversation when you started talking the moment that the other person stopped (or before!). What are 3 questions you could have asked that person in order to fully listen?

4. Language

Consider the actual words you use? Are they magical or evil? Do they create good, or make others feel bad? Are your words clear and concise? Or do you have a challenge getting to the point (if you have one)? Do you use the language of *possibility*? What is your tone? How does it make others feel? What about your non-verbal communication? What message are you sending with your body and your facial expressions?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

Consider a recent conversation that wasn't as successful as you would have liked it to be. How would you answer the questions above?

"It seems rather incongruous that in a society of super-sophisticated communication, we suffer from a shortage of listeners."

~Erma Bombeck

5. Asking Questions

Simply put, asking great questions helps to ensure great communication.

Do you make assumptions in your communications? What do those assumptions create? Do you assume that others received your message as intended? What kinds of questions would help clarify your understanding as you communicate with others? How are you at asking brilliant questions?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

Think of someone who you would be thrilled to meet. If you could ask them 3 powerful and meaningful questions, what would those be?

6. Acknowledging and Appreciating

Extraordinary Leaders tend to be brilliant at this. They use their unique ability to connect with others by sharing something that they appreciate about the other person. They certainly comment on *what* the other person *did* as well as *who* they are. How are you at acknowledging and showing appreciation during your communications?

(Atrocious) 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 (Extraordinary)

What if we didn't wait until a retirement party or a funeral to acknowledge people? Choose one person who you will acknowledge and use the lines below to write out your thoughts.

"Nothing is so simple that it cannot be misunderstood"
~Freeman Teague Jr.

3 BIG IDEAS!

Here are 3 obstacles that tend to get in the way of Extraordinary Communication. When addressed and practiced, these can automatically elevate your communication. Take a look at them and see what gems you might find that can connect for you.

1. Letting go of the “need” to be “right”!

As coaches, we often observe that people would rather be “right” than “successful”. Strange but true! It seems ridiculous that someone would risk losing the war so that they could win the battle. The reality is that we all do it to a certain extent, and sometimes with certain people! Sometimes we encounter people who cannot allow themselves to be seen as wrong in anything. Other times we notice that a position of power allows a person the need to be right. Additionally, we watch those who in the name of “perfection” always need to be right. Regardless of why, we know that the need to win every battle can result in paying a costly price - to teams, relationships, and to ourselves.

Think of a time when your “need to be right” got in the way of successful communication. If you were to replay it, what would you say/do differently?

2. Recovering from an unsuccessful conversation!

Unsuccessful communication happens! Service professionals will admit that unsuccessful service occurs - even when the intention is to deliver the Extraordinary. These professionals know that the *gift* is in seeing the opportunity in turning the situation around and recovering brilliantly. The same holds true in communication. The true gift is when you get to see those unsuccessful moments as a chance to deepen the relationship versus losing it. After observing a lack of success, communication professionals:

- Have a desire to make it right
- Know how it could be different if they had a “do-over”
- Can identify what made the conversation go “sideways”
- Know that they have a role in the outcome, and take full accountability
- Let the other person know their intent to fix the situation and confirm the intention of that person.
- Address what went wrong
- Re-communicate to make both parties win

How will you approach a “do-over” that you need to have?

3. Navigating the Difficult Conversations

We all need to have them, but few have mastered the art of having them well. In fact, most people avoid them entirely and “hope” the situation improves. Although sometimes that may work, it seems that the best approach is to simply muster up the courage and do your best. With #1 and #2 above in mind, here are a few more ideas to consider:

- Take personal accountability - decide to have it!
- Make your intention clear - to you and the other person.
- The Black Dot! Be sure to focus on the good things versus just discussing what is wrong.
- Show up in gratitude - truly be grateful for this opportunity.
- Ask questions - instead of lecturing or telling.
- Watch your words - are they respectful and productive?
- Admit when you are wrong - it will go a long way.
- Create a win - for both sides.

What conversation have you been “meaning” to have? How have you decided to approach it?

Design Extraordinary Communication!

Pretend you could do this... Take your head off of your shoulders and replace it with the best communicator you have ever met (or known of) OR the head of someone you greatly respect who always tells you exactly what you need to hear. Now that your body has a different head, give yourself the advice that you need to hear about your own communication. Here's what we know happens... once you take your own head off your shoulders you rid yourself of ego. If the ego gets in the way of communicating with ourselves it is surely getting in the way of communicating with others.

Given your new perspective...what was the advice you received? What areas of communication do you need to focus on?

NOW...

What is your communication goal? What actions have you decided to take in your own communication - either with yourself or others? What reminders will you give yourself before every conversation?

Some final thoughts on Extraordinary Communication!

“Two monologues do not make a dialogue.”

~Jeff Daly

It's here! We are now in a world of emails, texting, tweeting, pinging, blogging, and chatting...all of that said, we challenge you to look at your own communication.

Our ability to communicate is one of the greatest gifts we have been given. If the way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives, doesn't it make sense to communicate in a productive and powerful way? When we become more aware of how powerful our words are, we may take care in choosing the words we use. We also might take more care in deciding what meaning we give to the words others say.

“When the eyes say one thing, and the tongue another, a practiced man relies on the language of the first.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true.”

~Charles Dickens

Communication is a tool that can build up or break down. In the hands of someone who doesn't feel good about themselves, words can be used as a weapon to knock others down. In the hands of someone who understands their power, words can be used to solve problems, craft great relationships, create goodness and build up others.

The best communicators in the world know their communication can be flawed by their humanness, but they continue to work on improving this skill.

“The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate.”

~Joseph Priestly

We hope you will keep working on your gift!

If we can help you with this project or support you and/or your organization in any way, please contact us:

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