

# good manners

## The Human Connection

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### George Bernard Shaw once said, “The single

biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” Did you know that 75% of all communication is either forgotten, misunderstood, or ignored? This shouldn’t be too surprising. We’ve all experienced it at one time or another. You are sure you told your son to take out the trash, but he insists he never heard you. You ask your co-worker to purchase red pens and she orders black. Your husband asks you to pick up his dry cleaning and you forget.

I love this story that shows how just a few forgotten words can change an entire message. This is allegedly true. An aerospace company was asked to test the strength of airplane and military jet windshields when they collided with birds. The engineers built a powerful gun designed to shoot dead chickens at a high speed into the windshields. The test worked beautifully with no broken windshields. In another part of the world, the windshields of high speed trains was being tested. They heard about the tests with the dead chickens and asked for the specifications of the gun and the testing methods. Unfortunately, every single bird shot from their gun shattered the train windshields. Frustrated, they wrote to the aerospace company explaining what had happened. They asked for



suggestions and received a brief reply of just six words: “You need to defrost the chickens.”

All too often, breakdowns in communication occur resulting in hurt feelings, anger, and frustration. With today’s bombardment of communication coming at us from every direction, it’s hard to keep straight who said what, and why they said it, and what we are supposed to do with whatever was said in the first place. It’s exhausting!

Here are just five tips, just to keep it simple, for communicating effectively:

1. Body Language:

2.

- Make eye contact.
- Nod occasionally.
- Lean in.
- Refrain from crossing arms over your chest.
- Don’t display distracting or nervous gestures.
- Get rid of filler words such as “Ummm,” “You know,” “Like.”

3. Clear and Concise Words:

- Don’t use jargon or industry words that may be misunderstood.
- Refrain from wasting the listener’s time with long stories.
- Speak with a strong and clear voice.
- Stay on topic.
- Think before you speak. Seriously.

4. Listen:

- Use empathy.
- Don’t interrupt.
- Ask questions for clarity.

- Summarize or paraphrase for clarity.
  - Focus on what the speaker is communicating rather than what you want to say next.
  - Refrain from monopolizing the conversation.
5. Timing:
- Make sure it is a good time to talk.
  - Make appointments if necessary.
  - Pay attention to the body language of those you are speaking with. Do they look uninterested, rushed, bored, or distracted.
  - Determine if it is an appropriate time to communicate certain information such as bad news, personal information, etc.
6. Practice Patience:
7. In today's fast-paced life, it's easy to push a conversation along while missing important information or details. Slow down.

It is important to remember that effective communication skills do not always come naturally. It takes practice. But, it's well worth the effort in honing this important skill. After all, communication is at the core of all human connections.

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