



**Best Practices**

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**Interpersonal Communications**

Michael A. Taylor  
www.gym.net

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**Interpersonal Communication Skills**

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**Minimize conflict and build collaboration in a team-oriented workplace.**



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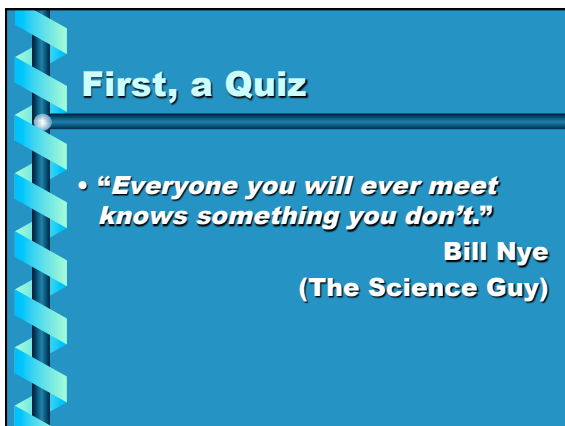
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**First, a Quiz**

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- *“Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don’t.”*

**Bill Nye**  
**(The Science Guy)**

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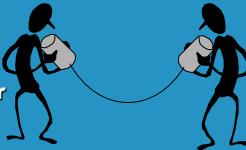
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### Communication

- **IS NOT**
  - One-way
  - What you say or
    - How you say it
- **IS**
  - A two-way flow of information



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### Communication Involves

- A message
- A sender
- A receiver



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### Listening Obstacles

- Speaking / listening rate gaps
- Physical distractions
- Emotional deafness
- Boredom & disinterest
- Lack of concentration



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### Perceptual Differences

- Backgrounds
- Experiences
- Interpretations
- Emotions
- Prejudices

A black stick figure is shown in profile, scratching its head with its right hand. A question mark is positioned above its head, indicating a state of confusion or deep thought.

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### Message Shaping

- 7% words
- 38% verbal
- 55% non-verbal

A black stick figure is shown in profile, holding a telephone receiver to its ear with its right hand. In its left hand, it holds a document with a grid pattern. Above the figure, there is an envelope icon and a speech bubble icon, representing various forms of communication.

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### Body Language

- Smile
- Touch
- Affirmative Head Nods
- Immediacy Behaviors
- Eye Behavior

A black stick figure is shown in profile, smiling and nodding its head. Above the figure are several icons: a star, an exclamation mark, a speech bubble, and a heart, representing positive and affirming behaviors.

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## Getting Started

Handshake

- Palm to the side
- Meet web to web
- Eye contact
- Smile
- Thought projection



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## Small Talk

- Observe, then comment, considering:
  - Resources
  - Ideas
  - Skills
  - Experiences
  - Talents
  - Enthusiasms
  - Hobbies
  - Passions



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## Networking

- **Confident**
- **Friendly**
- **Interested**
- **Hosting**
- **Timing**



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### Gaining Understanding

- Be specific
- Avoid labeling
- Repeat instructions
- Personally observe
- Determine timing
- Account for biases



*Shared experiences help overcome differences in perception.*

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### Communication Styles

- Sequential (Logic)
- Concrete (Hands-On)
- Abstract (Research)
- Random (Intuition)



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### Communication Styles

- **Mr. / Ms. Fix-It**  
Concrete Sequential
  - Focuses on ideas & tasks
  - Thinks methodically & predictably
  - Doesn't adjust easily to change



*Prefers learning from hands-on experience, logically organized, using the five senses to absorb information.*

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### Communication Styles

- **Utilitarian**  
**Abstract Sequential**
  - Relies on logical, impersonal analysis & systematic planning
  - Creates theoretical models from wide range of information
  - Slow to decide
  - Less concerned with people than with ideas

*Prefers learning from logical presentation of ideas.*

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### Communication Styles

- **Explorer**  
**Concrete Random**
  - Relies on experience-based information
  - Finds practical uses for ideas and theories
  - Bases decisions on finding solutions
  - Quick to decide
  - Risk taker / Thrives on change
  - Relies more on people than technical analysis for information

*Prefers learning from trial and error.*

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### Communication Styles

- **Free Thinker**  
**Abstract Random**
  - Forms opinions from feelings
  - Views experiences from different perspectives
  - Thinks intuitively, does not rely on logic
  - Balks at structure
  - Great brainstormer / Likes to generate new ideas

*Prefers learning from lots of free-form ideas.*

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### Listening

- Use empathy
- Listen for total meaning
- Suspend judgment
- Tolerate silence
- Ask questions
- Take notes



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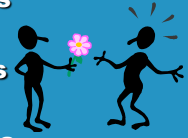
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### Verbal Buffers

- Use people's names
- Say "no" positively
- Ease confrontations
- Convey urgency
- Reflect perspectives



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### Powerful Voice

<b>Turnoffs</b>		<b>Delivery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apathy</li><li>• Rushed</li><li>• Irritation</li><li>• Phoniness</li><li>• Hesitation</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tone</li><li>• Articulation</li><li>• Pitch</li><li>• Volume</li><li>• Projection</li><li>• Rhythm</li><li>• Pace</li></ul>

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### Giving Feedback

- Distinguish between perception and fact
- Focus on specific, observable behavior
- Focus on probable outcome or possible improvements
- Avoid loaded terms
- Deal with emotions first
- Focus on value to receiver
- Give an amount receiver can use
- Share ideas and information



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### Receiving Feedback

- Listen carefully
- Mentally note disagreements without getting defensive
- Check perceptions by paraphrasing
- Ask for clarification
- Evaluate what you've heard
- Gather additional information from other sources
- Act on feedback as appropriate



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### Giving Negative Feedback

- Schedule Time / Privacy
- Be direct, not brutal

**Expect**

- ACCEPTANCE
- DENIAL
- IGNORANCE
- ANGER
- DEFENSIVENESS



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### Receiving Negative Feedback

- Buy Time
- Confront head-on
- Sidestep the issue

A black stick figure is slumped over with its head down and arms hanging, representing a person receiving negative feedback.

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### Coaching Effectively

- “Front-load” the why
- Match verbal & non-verbal cues
- Be clear / concise

A group of black stick figures are celebrating, with one figure in the center holding a trophy and others around it.

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### Disagree Agreeably

- Respect others
- Listen & support first
- Ask questions
- Be specific & constructive
- Disagree non-judgmentally
- Offer another solution

A black stick figure is gesturing with its hands, representing a person in a discussion or disagreement.

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### Leading A Meeting

- Be honest about why you want a meeting
- Stay focused
- Facilitate discussion
- Increase participation
- Get the groups' attention
- Refocus discussion to results
- Handle egos and conflict



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### Participating In A Meeting

- Be prepared (and on time)
- Look confident & interested
- Don't monopolize discussion
- Speak up
- Ask questions
- Sit in a powerful place
- Don't get defensive



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### Minimize Mistakes

- Give "just the facts"
- Tell who was involved (without finger-pointing)
- Admit responsibility
- Tell who needs to know
- Tell how the problem was fixed
- Have a plan to prevent future mistakes



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**Written Communications**

- **Who, What, When, Where, Why**
- **Use empathy**
- **Listen for total meaning**  
Suspend judgment
- **Tolerate silence**
- **Ask questions**
- **Take notes**



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**Get The Message**

- **Listen with understanding**
- **Agree on definitions**
- **Determine actions necessary**
- **Explore possibilities**
- **Focus on issues**



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**Problem Solving**

**Dealing with  
Conflict and  
Confrontation**

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### Conflict

- Conflict is inevitable
- Can be disruptive and destructive
- Change causes conflict, not good or bad
- Is a dangerous opportunity
- Prevents stagnation
- Stimulates interest
- Fosters creativity
- Can't totally eliminate conflict but it can be averted by prevention and control methods

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### Conflict Prevention

- Use Fewer Roadblocks
  - (ordering, threatening, judging, name-calling)
- Use Reflective (active) listening skills
- Use assertion skills when needed to prevent build up of emotions (tell vs. sell)
- Be aware of behaviors (triggers) likely to start conflicts
- Increase emotional support

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### Conflict Management Strategies

**One you choose depends on:**

- your short term and long term goals
- your emotional state
- assessment of the situation
- the power ratio involved
- your communication competence
- personality - assertive, passive, aggressive

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### Handling Emotions of Conflict

- **Conflict has emotions and substance**
  - Focus on emotions first
- **Rules of Conflict Resolution**
  - Treat the other person with respect
  - Experience the "other side"
  - State your views, needs and feelings

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### Conflict Scenario

- **Two employees have suddenly stopped speaking to one another. Other staff members have noticed and have expressed concern over the "hostile" atmosphere. OK Supervisor...**
  - *What do you do?*

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### Model of Conflict Resolution

- **Approach (be available)**
- **Define the Conflict (content issues)**
- **Gather Data (without judgments)**
- **Generate Possible Solutions**
- **Follow Through**

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### Approach:

- Close enough to intervene if necessary
- You've signaled your awareness and availability
- At this point we hope they will be able to resolve the situation to their mutual satisfaction.
- If there is no further conflict, if they are able to resolve the issue themselves, no further action is necessary.
- If they are not able to reach a mutually acceptable solution, it may be necessary to help them understand their feelings. Give them the framework and tools to articulate what they are going through...

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### Define the Problem:

- Describe the scene
  - "It looks like..."
- Reflect what they have said
  - "I hear..., and you are both angry."
- **NO JUDGMENTS, NO VALUES, NO SOLUTIONS**
- If they are not able to reach a mutually acceptable solution, it may be necessary to ask more questions in order to help them get to the root of the problem and to understand their emotions...

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### Gather Data:

- Not directed toward pinpointing blame or fault.
- Drawing out details, defining problems.
- Help facilitate communication vs. slugging it out:
  - "How did this happen?"
  - "What do you want to tell her?"
  - "How could you solve this problem?"
  - "How could you use it without negative behaviors?"
- If they are still involved in conflict, it may be necessary to provide a little direction without solving the problem for them...

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### Generate Alternatives:

- **ASK QUESTIONS** – Give the job of thinking and figuring out what *they* are going to do to solve *their* problem.
- **Be there to facilitate:**
  - “How are we going to solve this problem?”
- **Agree on a solution;**
- **For example, they might say:**
  - “We could take turns.”
  - “That’s OK, she was there first.”
  - “We could both do it together.”
  - “We could both do something else.”
  - “No one could do it.”
- **Some of the things that they come up with would never occur to us, but will work well for them.**
- **If there is still no resolution, if they have not been able to solve their own problem, it may require that the Supervisor become more actively involved...**

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### Follow Through

- **Model appropriate behavior.**
- **Narrate the model behavior.**
- **BOTTOM LINE GOAL is to resolve the social conflict with as little “third-party” involvement as possible.**
- **Last resort is to solve the problem if they can’t:**
- **“It looks like this is too hard for you two to figure out. This is what we’ll do...”**

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### One view... the “zero-sum game”

The diagram shows a horizontal double-headed arrow. On the left end of the arrow, the text reads "You win, I lose". On the right end of the arrow, the text reads "I win, you lose".

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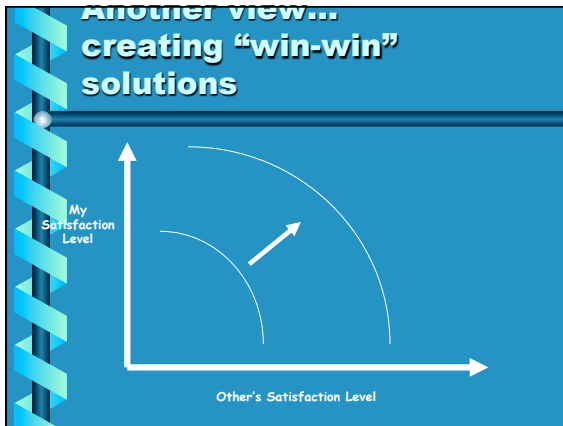
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- ### Conflict Resolution Skills
- Set up fair and orderly discussion
  - Invite expression of others feelings, summarize, express your feelings
  - Give uninterrupted time to talk and listen
  - Give and request feedback
  - Brainstorm resolutions evaluate options
  - Agree to clear specific plan, timetable, evaluation method

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- ### Implementation tools
- Ground rules
  - Agreements (informal)
  - Contracts (formal)
  - Plans
  - Rules, resolutions, policies, procedures (policymaking instruments)
  - Use of "neutrals"
  - Organizational arrangements
  - Periodic review/monitoring

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**Conflict Resolution Skills**

- **Reflective (Active) listening**
- **I - messages**
- **Competent communication**
- **Reframing - think of conflict as positive not just negative; put it in a positive light**
- **Address observable facts - issues relevant to conflict and your feelings.**
- **ASK to discuss issue.**

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**Model of Staff Conflict Resolution**

- **Address the emotions first**
- **Define the content issues**
  - identify the content issues and the underlying relationship issues
  - who will do the task vs whose time is more valuable
  - in specific terms "you are cold and unfeeling vs you don't support the rest of the staff"
  - see it from other persons point of view
  - don't assume

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**Model of Staff Conflict Resolution**

- **Examine Possible Solutions**
  - identify as many solutions as possible
  - look for win-win
  - avoid win-lose
  - weigh cost and rewards
- **Test the Solution**
  - mentally
  - how does it feel, how will it feel tomorrow
  - would you all be comfortable with it
  - test in practice
  - put solution into operation

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**Model of Staff Conflict Resolution**

- **Evaluate the Solution**
  - will it help resolve the conflict
  - will the situation be better or worse
  - share perception
  - might other solutions be more effective
- **Accept or Reject the Solution**
  - if accepted... put in permanently
  - if rejected... keep looking for solution

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**What NOT to do**

- **Avoidance, flight, denial**
- **Force (physically violent)**
- **Blame**
- **Give the silent treatment**
- **Guerilla warfare (passively aggressive)**
- **Fighting below the belt**
- **Verbal abuse**

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**Recap**

- **The “outcome” should...**
  - Be the product of a fair process
  - Be the result of a creative process
  - Be reached efficiently
  - Be as nearly self-enforcing as possible

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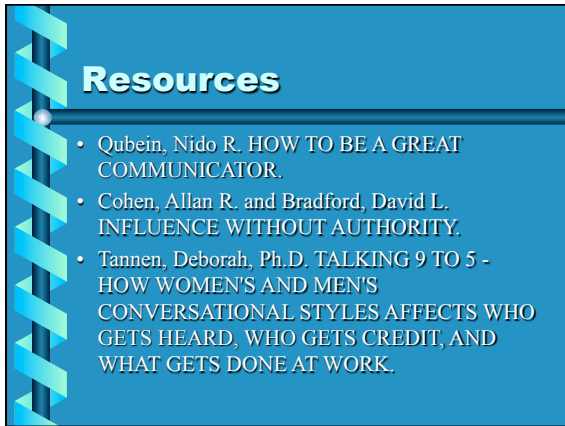
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### Resources

- Qubein, Nido R. HOW TO BE A GREAT COMMUNICATOR.
- Cohen, Allan R. and Bradford, David L. INFLUENCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY.
- Tannen, Deborah, Ph.D. TALKING 9 TO 5 - HOW WOMEN'S AND MEN'S CONVERSATIONAL STYLES AFFECTS WHO GETS HEARD, WHO GETS CREDIT, AND WHAT GETS DONE AT WORK.

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