

Communication Is A Learned Skill

When you were born, you didn't have to learn how to breathe, hear, taste, smell or cry. We arrive in this world with innate abilities to experience our world. They are natural outcomes of the human condition. Many of life's greatest and most memorable enjoyments come from interactions with our senses.

Ability To Communicate

An extension of our senses is the ability to communicate, and the best communication combines what we see, say, and hear. Organized and used effectively, these three senses produce an ability to share and receive information. But there is more to this story. Unlike our ability to hear, communication requires that we learn to listen effectively. Unlike our ability to cry, communication requires that we learn to use language effectively. And, don't forget the impact of body language. What we see impacts how we process communication.

Communication Is A Skill

Said simply, communication is a skill we can learn and improve over an entire lifetime. Organizing our thoughts and presenting them in an understandable form is the foundation for effective written and spoken communications.

Continuous improvement in our communications is possible, so let's examine a few things we can do daily to enhance our skills. Pick a few best practices and introduce them to your daily routine.

Read, Listen, Learn, And Apply

Read articles and blog posts from knowledge-based experts. When you encounter a new word, take time to research its definition and study its context and use. Authors with a solid language foundation will introduce you to new terms.

Listen to skilled narrators. Study their message and delivery. Pay attention to their words, pace, and tone of voice.

Watch skilled presenters. Watch how they balance body language with their tone of voice, the pace of their presentation, and the sequence of their main talking points.

Be an active observer during your office meetings. Observe how people respond to messages and how they are delivered.

Complete a crossword puzzle or access a word app to test your vocabulary.

Formulate what you want to say before you begin speaking or writing. (begin with the end in mind)

Make your point, stop and invite feedback. This allows others an opportunity to join the conversation.

Use positive words, phrases, and body language to deliver your thoughts and ideas. It invites feedback and avoids defensive positioning.

Consider which form of communication will be the most effective for your message; written, verbal, or digital. Evaluate the best method to deliver your message and the preferred method for your recipient.

Use your words. Using acronyms can be confusing to recipients. An OD for a banker means 'overdraft', but a medical professional might immediately think 'overdose'. Using words ensures clarity.