

COMMUNICATION PART 12

Earth to Mars....Hello....Are you there? Doesn't a person feel like that when a verbal message is ignored? Sometimes you are lucky to get a grunt from a verbal comment. A friendly verbal message requires something like, "Hello, thank you for your message!" At least the sender knows that the verbal message was received and acknowledged. Yes—we all expect something in return!! The truth is, though, we always get something in return—verbally or behaviorally.

Look at the person who is trying to communicate with you verbally and watch the behavior. Even a more intelligent response than "huh-huh" for a verbal comment from others would be beneficial! The more you actually and intellectually hear what is said and the implications of what is inferred or written, the more likely you will respond intelligently. Now, if you decide not to verbally respond, isn't that a message, too? If you have a question about the meaning of what is communicated (verbally or behaviorally), get some clarification. Then, you will more likely hear (and understand) the intended message.

When someone directs a verbal or obvious communication your way (verbally, written, behaviorally, or even a gift), there is a responsibility to respond—in some way. Ignoring any communication situation is unacceptable, and the outcome of neglecting is that communication between individuals will cease or have consequences. If you desire to retain a powerful stance, this cannot happen. Listen to all aspects of communication, hear the verbal message and watch the behavioral message. Then, whatever you choose to share (verbally or behaviorally) is an extension of you and always carries YOUR message.

Example:

The guy winks at a girl, and his facial response says a nonverbal message. If she returns the wink, smiles, and wrinkles her nose, the message is received with a like thought. But, if she gives back a blank stare or squints her eyes as she frowns and then turns around, isn't that a communication to the winking message? Body language (a behavioral message), as well as verbal communication, sometimes says it all!

Reciprocity and Fair Exchange: The conversation is sometimes one-sided. Listening to or telling the same tale continually becomes "old hat." Sometimes it would be nice to hear (as an example)—"Hey, tell me about your children" or "Tell me about what you did over the weekend." Why don't we listen or ask about other people and their lives? Or do our cohorts just need to hear what we do or about us? Try listening and finding out about others instead of just telling them about you and yours. Intelligent leaders have a cadre of words to select an appropriate response and give answers. Being extremely minimal with your verbal comments during any communication shows a lack of interest, and (who knows) it could be seen as minimal intelligence. And—who would want that reputation as a leader?!

Saying Words/Messages the Way They Are Intended: When you communicate did you mean to say or infer the person was "stupid?" Did you infer something that was not verbally said but is implied? Sometimes when we verbally say something, a silent word is easily added to the end of our comments that seems to infer the word "stupid." A person might not need to say the word "stupid" at the end of a comment—it is just there as an unspoken word resulting in a demeaning feeling by the person who receives the message.

Remember—It is important HOW YOUR MESSAGE IS RECEIVED BY OTHERS THROUGH YOUR WORDS, UNSPOKEN/INFERRED WORDS, AND YOUR ACCOMPANYING BEHAVIOR. IS THE MESSAGE YOU PROJECTED WHAT YOU INTENDED TO SHARE?

Carolyn Taylor, Ed.D. M.N. R.N.