

©2020 Published by Elemental Potential Ltd. First Edition.

These notes are copyright, except for the purpose of fair review, no part may be stored or transmitted in any form, by any means, electronic, digital, including: recording or storage in any information retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher. No reproduction may be made whether by photocopying or any other means unless a licence has been obtained from the publisher.

Knock your bad communication habits on the head once and for all

Most bad communication habits are patterns. They arrive through pre-conditioning from your childhood and role models, from your current environment (to thrive and survive) and from individual people.

Think of what you are working with currently in your workplace/family. How long ago did it start? What do you show people is acceptable? What do you send out to others in your workplace and life?

Navigating situations in the workplace can be tricky. Peer pressure, hierarchy, habits and rituals, dominant personalities – it's a heady mix of unique personalities all aiming for a common goal.....in theory! The reality is that it can be hard work to work together at times, and knowing where the pitfalls lie will always help you out.

Have you ever thought about communication in the workplace? How just one or a few people can make a difference – for good or bad?

Every face to face, email, or phone interaction has a ripple effect for good or bad on the people you interact with.

Where do you start? Start with you, set yourself free from outworn ideas and attitudes, and you begin to determine how people communicate with you. You also stop being the source of dis-ease in other peoples' lives. You may be their burden?

Things that enable bad habits to take hold:

- When the person leading people is the problem. Hierarchy is an issue in communication. Ideally communication would just flow wherever it needs to, but that is easier said than done when your boss is the problem. Think about who else you could go to, other channels to express yourself. I've been criticised before for encouraging people to speak up when no one else will, but what's the alternative? If you are afraid of reprisals or being fired because of

what you need to say, then you probably don't want to be working there anyway for your emotional and mental safety!

- Being time poor 'BUSY'. Take on board the people who play the busy card are sometimes just ineffective – don't let that be an excuse for what happens next. Are you/they really busy? Or - taking on other people's stuff, being distracted away from your purpose on other people's say so? Be willing to ask questions that protect your time such as:
Why me? Why now? Does it have to be now? Why has it been left so late?
- A.P.E

All communication lives or dies, thrives or survives on just three things. These three things cause everything that you deal with, see, or hear every day. Everything in your life. Everything in the world. Politics. Leadership. Relationships. Business.

Assumption – what happens when you haven't bothered to find out the facts, reality, or check the accuracy of feelings, information, or situations.

Perception – what other people have outside of your reality. You may think you have delivered clear, concise and concrete communication, but another persons' perception may be quite different. Much depends on individual personalities and communication styles.

EGO. What happens when it's all about you - you talk over people, interrupt. Take out the I's and Me's and you get to the core message.

Your ability and courage to corrective coach – this is what you do when you 'see it, say it' - call somebody out on something and create a learning opportunity for them. You change patterns of behaviour.

Invisible questions – these are questions that are vague, give people an option they could say no to, or promote a passive stance. Examples are: "If you have a minute could you....." "Could you....." "Is it possible for you to....." The more passive the person the more invisible the questions. Instead.....

Lead with the fact or need – what you do instead of asking invisible questions and want to get the job done efficiently. "That needs to be presented at 10am please Julie, so the board can make a decision."

Avoid twiddly bits - aka the kiss of death. All of the unnecessary and extra parts of communication that you don't need, didn't need to add on, or detract from the core message.

Using their name for emphasis and in the right place

Over saying sorry = passive behaviour - find an alternative. An ideal way to not say sorry if it's not actually your fault. "*Unfortunately*, the newspapers haven't arrived yet Mr Smith, we'll get one to you as soon as they do."

Saviours and Martyrs – the people who swoop in and take the credit, like to look good doing things/being seen to do the most work, telling people what they've done etc.

Social Office Fairies – the people who chew through other peoples' time socialising and making gossip. It is thought that it takes 18 minutes to get your head back in the game after such an interruption.

Unholy alliances – the people who should be protecting people – but don't. The managers and supervisors who condone office cliques, bullying, alienation and exclusion of people, name calling. This can be through inappropriate relationships (family members friends as colleagues) or through too passive behaviour and inability to engage and corrective coach it. Groups of people kitten feeding one instigator who is passive aggressive, instead of challenging them and standing up for marginalised or undermined peers.

The main things to remember if you really want to re-programme your communication habits or the habits of others:

➔ DON'T FEED THE KITTEN!

Whatever you invite in you accept. Whatever you accept becomes the new normal. Whatever becomes the new normal you have to live with! Ask yourself what you are living with that you don't like in your communication? When did it start? Who started it? How long can you put up with it?

The good news? Communication starts and ends with you.

The bad news? Communication starts and ends with you!

➔ Choose your thoughts and actions wisely. You are a creator! You reap what you sow in communication. It really is that simple. You show other people by your actions what you will accept, and what you think acceptable communication is.

What can help you?

➔ LIVE IN QUESTIONLAND

How questions work better than statements. People get used to being 'flipped' and made accountable. It gives them a voice. It helps set boundaries too. It changes your mind-set and invokes positive manifestation. **This is where the magic really lies in Compassionate Assertiveness** - It's all in the quality of your questions!

Never make a statement when you can ask a question

Statements will always sound to the receivers' ear somewhere between preaching, opinion, judgement, nagging, whiney, moralisation.

Don't ask a closed question if you don't want to feel let down. Yes, or no answers don't guarantee you a result. There is no learning opportunity in them like a flip question. A compassionately assertive question always creates an opportunity for self-analysis AND knows when to STOP.

So, what do you do?

The easiest way to explain this is:

- Ask the most obvious logical thing in an open compassionately assertive question
- Keep it short (6-9 words)
- Resist adding on twiddly bits of any kind. They are the kiss of death.
- Keep going in the thread until you have a result – don't back off if people give you a witty, dismissive or smart arse come back, keep going – that's where the awareness raising moment is in the clunky and awkward zone.
- Flip\Feel/consequence/choice – surrender
- Practice, you'll soon see how aggressive, unnecessary and 'judgey' your communication has been..... and , why you've not been getting results.

Use mantras (to yourself) to re-programme you. They help you to engage at ground zero, not miss the opportunity to deal with a ping, and not let the emotional ping stay with you.

Mantras should generally be positive, but occasionally negative ones work too with deeply ingrained behaviour to wound the ego. If you do feel the need to use a negative one, then add a sweetener and awareness raiser onto the end. Such as: You failed there Steph (anger) what could you have done differently?

Choose which mantra resonates best with you. Funny works best I find, if you get just the right tone, it makes you laugh as well as correcting the behaviour.

Remember your EGO is trying to control everything in your life. How you react, respond, what you say and do, how you feel, how you perceive others feel. When

you work on your ego, you will resort to anger, resentment, fear, and contempt less often and eventually never. You will be more patient, more gracious.

Your ego is merely a shortcut to actually taking the time to find out, listen and not run on assumptions and mis-perceptions. Your ego can only feel wounded **if you let it**. Choose humanity. Choose Love. Look for the win-win.

I'll be cheering you on. Engage. Be brave. Step up. Call people out (compassionately). Work on yourself first. Use body language to help you.

Lots of interesting articles on these topics for free over on the Podcasts and blogs page of www.elementalpotential.com.