



A Look at Communication *Method isn't Important as Message*

Adult communication (ages 18+), at its core, is universal, and in order to survive in the workforce, we have to have it. Sure, there are language barriers, generational differences, technological gaps, and other variables that hinder communication between certain people; however, everyone communicates to transfer or convey some variety of information.

With that said, I'd like to focus on communication between groups: friends, significant others, children, parents, bosses, teachers, employees, co-workers, etc. I believe that groups have and will always dictate communication for everyone. For example, I'm not having the same conversations with my friends as I am with my parents. Mix and match any of the groups listed above and you'll be able to see instantly how they vary.

Understanding the group communication concept allows people to create stronger and more meaningful relationships. An example of this would be the employee/boss relationship. As long as the employee and boss know, understand, and respect the relationship, it will grow and develop. This doesn't mean their relationship must be boring and strictly professional. They can communicate and talk about non-work related subjects; however, if the boss starts treating the employee too much like an informal friend or vice versa, miscommunication will inevitably occur.

The employee/boss, teacher/student, parent/child, and every other relationship needs to have structure and rules. I'm not sure exactly how we learn how to interact between these groups, but I think it's learned from society and individual understanding. Think about this: Have you ever seen those parents that are really good friends with their teenage sons or daughters? Looks weird and makes the parent look kind of irresponsible. A mother and father aren't supposed to be their child's best friend. It's just how life is.

As I mentioned up top, adult communication, at its core, is universal. This can sometimes vary depending on an individual's maturity level and mental health; however, I truly believe that

people can form relationships regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, etc. People need to first identify and understand the group (parent/child, boss/employee, friend/friend) and then move on from there.

One group-to-group communication model I'll discuss is the employee/boss relationship. I have identified the group and will now focus on strengthening the relationship through communication. First, I'd like to talk about non-work related communication between the boss and employee. A good thing to do is have a sort of 'weekend/nightly review.' Sit down for a couple minutes and talk to each other and find out what each person does in their spare time. What are their non-work related interests? You will learn a lot more about each other and therefore, create a stronger relationship.

When the employee and boss listen to each other, the relationship becomes stronger. The bosses I enjoyed most were the ones I knew on a more personal level. I was never really a fan of the bosses I didn't know too well. Every boss I didn't know appeared selfish, arrogant, and only concerned with themselves. Maybe I had this perception because I didn't know them on a personal level? I'm not sure, but I do know that appearing as an unfair and selfish boss will ruin any employee/boss relationship and build resentment.

Communication between the employee/boss should also be clear and simple. Complex directions and jargon can frustrate employees. Make everything clear. Directness is good. Be upfront and assertive with your employee and let them know what needs to get done and if they have questions, to ask.

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Many men don't like asking questions. Make sure to tell them to ask if they are unsure. People need to stop feeling ashamed and start asking for help. Also, if employees mess up, let them know. Don't start yelling at them at the top of your lungs, instead be a good boss and teach them how to improve.

Technological communication is probably the biggest communication difference between generations. I think it's important to set employee/boss technology standards. How do you want to communicate electronically (phone, email, text message) with your employee? People are text messaging more and more these days. Is that appropriate? Do you know how to text? Do you like to text? What are your thoughts on email? Lay out specific rules for them. Also, discuss the different technological ways to communicate and learn from each other. Both parties need to listen in order to develop the best solutions.

Lastly, treat people fairly, listen to them, be helpful and considerate and you'll have a good employee/boss relationship. That's what it basically comes down to. Also, remember that the employee/boss relationship is not the same as friend/friend, husband/wife, co-worker/co-worker, etc.



Many people from different generations view each other differently. "I don't have anything in common with that young guy with his cell phone and all that fancy technology," says older man.

"I don't have anything in common with that old guy who doesn't use email," says younger man.

Not all people in the world have things in common, but most people, deep down, are the same and can relate to each other on some level. And here's another secret, all professionals have something in common—the profession. People are motivated to learn in professional environments that interest them. I'm not talking about McDonald's employees or anything like that, but people in the golf industry are here because they are interested in and want to learn about it.

Communication is universal and about how we communicate within our groups and not about the minor differences like generational differences, gender, or technological gaps. Strengthen your group communication by making yourself more aware and adhering to the specific group's structure and rules. **-OC**

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