

LESSON 6: SPEAK TO BE UNDERSTOOD / GET WHAT YOU PROJECT & EXPECT

MONITOR YOUR TONE OF VOICE

People take your tone of voice personally, even if it has nothing to do with them at all. It sends either a positive or negative message about your opinion of them as a human being.

Mixed messages, caused by voice tones that don't match spoken words can cause big problems in relationships of all kinds. When receiving a mixed message, people will respond to the tone and ignore the words.

If you ever hear yourself giving someone a mixed message, call attention to it and explain what your voice tone is saying.

When you acknowledge your tone and clarify what it is saying, you decrease the likelihood that the other person will take offense.

STATE YOUR POSITIVE INTENT

Stating your positive intent works best upfront. When you assume that someone understands your positive intent, or your intent is implied rather than stated clearly, misunderstanding can result. To prevent such misunderstanding, we must learn to communicate with our positive intent.

If you are at all typical, you probably don't tell people your intent when speaking to them. And the irony is, it's probably the most important part of your communication. After all, that's the purpose you are trying to achieve. The trick to communicating intent first is to ask yourself before you speak, "*What is my real purpose in saying what I'm about to say? What result am I aiming for?*"

TELL YOUR TRUTH

The more trust you have with someone, the more likely it is that you will be heard. So, you may spend some time building up the trust levels with blending behaviors before you attempt an open and honest conversation with your difficult person. Remember to tell your truth in a way that builds someone up rather than tearing someone down.

STAY FLEXIBLE

If the person you are communicating with becomes defensive, be willing to temporarily drop what you are saying and totally focus on their reaction to you. Do your best to fully understand by backtracking, clarifying, summarizing, and confirming (refer to lesson five).

QUICK SUMMARY: When you communicate with Problem People ...

Your Goal: Speak to Be Understood

Action Plan:

1. Monitor your tone of voice
2. State your positive intent
3. Tactfully Tell your truth
4. Be ready to listen

GET WHAT YOU PROJECT AND EXPECT

PYGMALION POWER

The researchers called this remarkable performance outcome, the “Pygmalion Effect” in the classroom. The teachers’ high expectations for the students, though never officially expressed, helped the students to believe in themselves and act accordingly. Other students have similarity revealed that to some degree, *people rise or fall to the level of others’ expectations.*

Parents use Pygmalion Power whenever they tell their children, *“If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times! You’re messing / clumsy / a liar / a slob / you don’t care about anyone but yourself!”* This mechanism can be utilized, instead, to bring out the best even in people at their worst. Wise parents will find it far more valuable to tell their children, *“That’s not like you! You care about your appearance / you know how to take care of things / you’re a loving, honest person / you know we love you / you are capable of doing anything you put your mind to!”*

When your difficult person is engaging in his problem behavior, you may be tempted to think or say, *“That’s the problem with you. You always ...,”* or *“You never ...”* To use Pygmalion Power effectively, learn to say, *“That’s not like you! You’re capable of ...”* and describe how you want him to be as if he truly is capable of living up to your description. And whenever your difficult person behaves in a manner that you would like to see repeated, learn to say, *“That’s one of the things I like about you. You ...”* and describe his positive behavior as a way of reinforcing his identification with it.

ASSUME THE BEST, GIVE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Assuming the best can have a positive effect on a problem person whether or not it’s true. I know you care about ... I know you were trying to help me when you said ... Whenever you tell a person she is doing something wrong, she will get defensive. You minimize defensiveness in another person by giving her the benefit of the doubt and assuming the best. Plus, it improves your overall mood, and outlook to search for the positive.

APPRECIATE CRITICISM

Some of us have a knee-jerk reaction to criticism, particularly when it seems unfair. We get defensive, over explain and often a fight ensues. Here’s a simple short circuit to rapidly bring criticism to a close without internalizing it or fighting against it: Verbally appreciate the criticism as a way of ending it. No defense, no explanation, no justification. A simple, “thanks” is all that it takes and it is over.

QUICK SUMMARY: When people are at their worst ...

Your Goal: Project and Expect the Best

Action Plan:

1. Use Pygmalion Power
2. Give the benefit of the doubt
3. Appreciate criticism.