

## Why Doesn't Anyone Listen to Me?



**Hebrews 3:13: (NASB) *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.***



We all need to be heard and we all need to be acknowledged. We all need that feeling of validation that comes with being personally recognized as having value. All of this comes through the important tool of communication. The problem is that we have become terrible at both the giving and receiving ends of the communication spectrum. Somehow, we think that posting, texting, tweeting and emoji can replace actual conversation, looking someone in the eye, feeling their emotions or touching their shoulder. Whether it is our lack of attention span, our need for convenience, personal laziness or

simply not knowing what we are missing, we have seemingly deserted real true person-to-person communication and replaced it with cold and emotionless technology. So, what do we do? How do we relearn both the giving and receiving ends of this invaluable and necessary tool for a fulfilled life called "communication"?

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: **Communicate**

1: share

2a: to convey knowledge of or information about: make known <communicate a story>

2b: to reveal by clear signs

3: to cause to pass from one to another



**Three of seven bad habits, *How to Speak So That People Want to Listen*, Julian Treasure, TED Talk**

- *The human voice. It's the instrument we all play. It's the most powerful sound in the world, probably. It's the only one that can start a war or say, "I love you" and yet, many people have the experience that when they speak, people don't listen to them. And why is that? How can we speak powerfully to make change in the world? What I'd like to suggest, there are a number of habits that we need to move away from. I've assembled for your pleasure here seven deadly sins of speaking. I'm not pretending this is an exhaustive list, but these seven, I think, are pretty large habits that we can all fall into. First, gossip. Speaking ill of somebody who's not present. Not a nice habit, and we know perfectly well the person gossiping, five minutes later, will be gossiping about us. Second, judging. We know people who are like this in conversation, and it's very hard to listen to somebody if you know that you're being judged and found wanting at the same time. Third, negativity. You can fall into this. My mother, in the last years of her life, became very negative, and it's hard to listen. I remember one day, I said to her, "It's October 1st today," and she said, "I know, isn't it dreadful?" It's hard to listen when somebody's that negative.*





While we generally understand communication is about connecting with others' emotions or being personally understood, the Bible goes a little deeper. It provides us with a number of examples of communicating through co-laboring and through a common cause.

**The only words translated "communicate" in the Bible are along these lines. Here are some examples:**

Galatians 6:6-7: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>*The one who is taught the word is to **share <2844>** (**communicate** in the KJV) all good things with the one who teaches him.* <sup>7</sup>*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

**Share:** Strong's #2841 to share with others (objectively or subjectively)

We frame communication as speaking to someone's heart, as having something important to say and having it heard and received by somebody else...and it is. But the Bible treats communication as something even bigger. It accomplishes something on a bigger scale.

*The one who is taught the word is to share (communicate)...with the one who teaches him* - The one teaching has a weight of responsibility to the congregation. Our spiritual leaders need encouragement, too, and to be stimulated to love and good works. With great spiritual responsibility comes anxiety of "How am I doing?" We should communicate with them and give them encouragement and constructive support and feedback.

Philippians 4:10-14: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.* <sup>11</sup>*Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.* <sup>12</sup>*I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.* <sup>13</sup>*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.* <sup>14</sup>*Nevertheless, you have done well to **share <4790>** (**communicate** in the KJV) with me in my affliction.*

**Share:** Strong's #4790 from #4862 and #2841; to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in

The Apostle Paul knew both abundance and want. He did not complain regardless of his circumstances.

*You have done well to share (communicate) with me in my affliction* - They may have sent him food or money to support him. Communication here is support, specifically care of a physical nature for someone going through a trial.

This is a great admonition for us to be concerned about those around us who have need. We need to communicate to find out if we can do something to help. We doubt the Apostle Paul sent out a letter saying, "Send money now, preferably in 20's and 50's." That was not his attitude. When word got back to the brethren that Paul had a need, they jumped on the opportunity to help him. They were really connected to Paul.



This next audio clip begins a VERY unlikely communication story, with small language edits made.

 **Eight friends and an evening party, *Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine*, NPR**

- (Michael) *It was kind of one of those great evenings. Lots of awesome food and French wine. It was like a magical night.*
- (Narrator) *Michael Rabdou, the man that you just heard, was there with his wife and his 14-year-old daughter, Khyber. He said it was getting later in the evening, maybe around ten, when it happened.*
- (Michael) *I was standing beside my wife, and I just saw this arm with a long barrel gun come between us. It was as if in slow motion this hand, and then it just got really quiet.*
- (Narrator) *The hand belonged to a man, medium height in a clean, high-end sweat suit. He raised the gun and held it first to Michael's friend, Kristina, and then to the head of Michael's wife.*
- (Michael) *And then he said, "Give me your money or I am going to start shooting."*
- (Khyber) *He just kept repeating, "Give me your money, give me your money."*
- (Narrator) *That's Khyber, Michael's daughter.*
- (Michael) *He looked anxious, nervous.*
- (Khyber) *Eyes wide.*
- (Michael) *His tone was very aggressive. When he said, "Give me your money or I am going to start shooting," we believed him.*

Romans 12:13: (KJV) *Distributing <2841> to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

Communication in Scripture assumes a common purpose and a resulting strong personal connection.

**If biblical communication means supporting those with common purpose, what about communicating with everyone else?**

While the Bible does not break down the methods of interpersonal connection we normally consider as communication, it does not ignore them either. The Bible gives us many examples of strong, personal communication in action under different circumstances.

Public gospel communication - how should we be connecting with those who don't share our faith? Well, not through the seven bad habits...

 **Four through seven bad habits, *How to Speak so that People Want to Listen*, Julian Treasure, TED**

- *And another form of negativity, complaining. Well, this is the national art of the UK. It's our national sport. We complain about the weather, about sports, about politics, about everything. But actually, complaining is viral misery. It's not spreading sunshine and lightness in the world. Excuses. We've all met this guy. Maybe we've all been this guy. Some people have a blame-thrower. They just pass it on to everybody else and don't take responsibility for their actions, and again, hard to listen to somebody who is being like that. The sixth of the seven, exaggeration. It demeans our language actually, sometimes. For example, if I see something that really is*

*awesome, what do I call it? And then, of course, this exaggeration becomes lying, out-and-out lying, and we don't listen to people we know are lying to us. And finally, dogmatism: the confusion of facts with opinions. When those two things get conflated, you're listening into the wind, you know somebody's bombarding you with their opinions as if they were truth. It's difficult to listen to that. So, here they are, seven deadly sins of speaking. These are things I think we need to avoid.*



(Source: Joeline Ashker, from notes that accompanied "Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine.") "Most people react negatively from fear, stress and anger. These reactions are simply habits learned at a young age. Over the past 20 years I've coached countless people who've transformed these patterns, because addictive habits CAN be changed."

One of the reasons people do not listen to us is because we have the same habits of communication over and over. We are not getting our message across.

Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something:

- 1) Slow down.
- 2) Observe - become aware and conscious of what you're thinking and how you are feeling.

The Apostle Paul was a great communicator, so we are going to look at several examples from his life.

**Here the Apostle Paul communicates with those outside of our faith:**

**Acts 17:16-20:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. <sup>17</sup>So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

Paul was waiting for others to arrive so they could work together on witnessing the message. Paul was alone at this point.

*His spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols - What he saw was terrible, so he was motivated to preach to these people. It was an attempt at worshipping but was completely off base. It troubled him to see such idolatry.*



*He was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles* - Paul spent his waiting time in two ways. First, he observed the people and their paganism. Second, he spent his time exchanging thoughts about the Gospel with those with whom he already had common ground.

He slowed down. While he was waiting for the brethren, he used this time to learn and absorb, figuring out what drove the people.

<sup>18</sup>And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, what would this idle babbler wish to say? Others, He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities, because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

He started out in a friendly environment where he did not have to think about paganism and idolatry, but there were outsiders listening in. He encountered two different reactions - some called him an *idle babbler*. Some people wanted to hear more. Though everybody did not perceive his speech as valuable, the way he was communicating with those with whom he had familiarity was clear enough so those who were not familiar with Jewishness or Christianity heard and wanted to hear more. This is a subtle example of the powerful communication of the Apostle Paul.

<sup>19</sup>And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, may we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? <sup>20</sup>For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so, we want to know what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

**Apostle Paul  
Communication Lesson:**

*If we first observe and respect our environment and then engage in the exchange of thought, our communication will have a strong basis for success.*



**Give me your money, Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine, NPR**  
(Edited for language)

- (Narrator) But there was a problem, which is that no one at the party actually had money. It was a fluke thing, but there it was.
- (Michael) What are we going to do? We can't just produce stuff.
- (Narrator) So, they just started talking, grasping for some way to dissuade the man, and naturally started with guilt.
- (Khyber) What would your mother think of you?
- (Michael) And he said something like, "I don't have a mother."
- (Narrator) The exchange got more and more tense.
- (Michael) It was just fueling the atmosphere of danger.



- (Narrator) *And Michael remembers thinking, "This is heading towards a very bad end."*
- (Michael) *Someone was going to get hurt, if not all of us. This was it.*
- (Narrator) *But then one of the women at the table, this woman Kristina, pipes up. She has an offer for the man.*
- (Kristina) *I said, "We're here celebrating, why don't you have a glass of wine and sit down."*
- (Michael) *And it was like a switch. You could feel the difference. It was definitely the right thing to say.*
- (Narrator) *All of a sudden, Michael says, "The look on the man's face changed."*
- (Michael) *And he tasted the wine and said, "...that's a really good glass of wine." We're like, "Well, have some more," and we poured him some more wine. We had some cheese there, too, and so he reached down for the cheese, and then he put the gun in his pocket and he sat down.*



### Practical application: Personal family communication - spouses, children:

Colossians 3:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. <sup>20</sup>Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children, (Find a way to communicate with them instead!) so that they will not lose heart.



The ability to "read" our family environment is a massively important principle, and most of the time we need to slow down, observe, think and THEN communicate.

Rick tells about raising his three children and having to account for their differences.



My son, Tim, needed a quick response; he needed someone to keep up with him on a high level. He was exhausting as a teenager! My daughter Emily was the opposite. She was quiet. There were times when she would be troubled and I would ask if I could come into her room. She would just nod. I would ask if I could sit and she would nod. Sometimes we would just sit in silence for 10 or 15 minutes until she finally felt she could start to talk. Amy, my youngest daughter, needed firm, clear guidance "or else." The three of them were entirely different. The way to figure that out was to slow down and watch, because there was not the same answer in all three cases.

We have to observe what is happening and then think how we can communicate with this individual under these particular circumstances?

### What do we need to know about communicating with other Christians when we might have issues?

Mutual communication with those we stand with can sometimes be the hardest kind, because our expectations are so much higher than with those who stand



against us. We expect unity and agreement but often get splintered opinions and divided thinking instead.

Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something:

3) Breathe and pause.

When Paul would have stood before them, I imagine he would have begun in a very calm and deliberate fashion:

Acts 17:22-23: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup>For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, to an unknown God. Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

When he used the word *ignorance*, was Paul putting them down? He was saying they were doing something without full knowledge. "I will show you the rest of the story and how to get to another level." This was not an insult; it was an identification of an area for growth. He wanted to change their ignorance to enlightenment.

Paul's communication was based on identifying with and acknowledging their piety. He met and respected them where they stood.



 Group hug, *Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine*, NPR

- (Narrator) The man drank his wine, ate his cheese and then he said something that no one expected. He said it almost to himself.
- (Michael) "I think I've come to the wrong place." And we were all like, "Hey, I understand, these things happen."
- (Narrator) For a moment, they all sat there together. The stars overhead twinkling, the sound of chirping insects in the night air.
- (Michael) And then he said something so strange. He said, "Can I get a hug?" And my wife hugged him and our friend hugged him, and then he said, "Can we have a group hug?"
- (Narrator) So, then everyone got up and formed a circle around the man.
- (Michael) I can't tell you how strange that was but we all did come around him and hug him, and then he said he was sorry and walked out with a glass of wine out the gate.



Personal fellowship communication with the body of Christ, the household of faith.

**Because we are so different from one another, we need to adopt the "breathe and pause" approach as we attempt mutual communication:**

**1 Corinthians 12:12-18:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup>For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many.

There is a unique equality within this body of Christ, and yet we are very different. We differ in personality, cultures, upbringing, education and weakness. These different parts each play a role. God called each part - we do not decide who else will be in the body - will we argue with God over who He chose or the role we are to play?

**But sometimes we look at a situation and may not like the part we are playing:**

<sup>15</sup>If the foot says, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear says, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

"Rank" is not important; rather, functionality as a unit is the most important thing! It does not matter what part you play, but play it well. Be the toe! Be the pinky! Do what needs to be done.

<sup>18</sup>But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

This body of Christ picture is one of depth and beauty, because it captures both the individuality of each member as well as the interconnectedness of all the members. This gives us simple and profound messages:

1. You are all under Christ,
2. You are one of many,
3. You are small, and
4. You are important!

Our mutual communication should reflect this profound four-corner foundation. We all have value or else the Lord would not have called us to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

 **Jedi mind trick, *The Extract Obliteration, The Big Bang Theory (Series 06, Episode 06)***

- (Sheldon trying to get Professor Stephen Hawking to play the popular online game "Words with Friends" with him) Play. Play.
- (Leonard) What are you doing?



- (Sheldon) *Trying to use a Jedi mind trick to control Stephen Hawking. (Laughter) Play. Play. Ugh! He must be wearing a tinfoil hat or something.*
- (Leonard) *I did a bad thing.*
- (Sheldon) *Does it affect me?*
- (Leonard) *No.*
- (Sheldon) *Then suffer in silence. Play. Play. Play. (Knock knock knock) Stephen Hawking. (Knock knock knock) Stephen Hawking. (Knock knock knock) Stephen Hawking. (Laughter)*
- (Leonard) *Penny started taking a class. She wrote a paper, she didn't want me to read it, I went behind her back and I read it anyway.*
- (Sheldon) *Stephen Hawking hates me.*
- (Leonard) *I don't know what to do. The paper's terrible. But if I tell her, she'll know that I read it and she'll get really mad.*
- (Sheldon) *I was beating him so bad he doesn't want to be friends any more. Why does everyone love me except Stephen Hawking?*

This is a classic example of someone who is so self-absorbed they cannot hear when someone else has an issue. Funny as this might be, do I ever do this to the people who are important to me? Do I get so self-absorbed that I cannot listen? Do I shut them out without even thinking about it? Communication is listening as much as it is speaking.

### One more "breathe and pause" text to help us be centered in our mutual communication:

Hebrews 10:24-25: (NASB) <sup>24</sup>and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Slow down, observe, breathe, pause and figure out how we can help each other to love and good works. How can we contribute in a positive way to the spiritual lives of others? It is great to talk about your day at work or the car you just bought, but it is better to communicate to contribute to each other's spirituality.

Sounds like respect! Great communication is respecting those whom you want to communicate with enough to consider them *first*. This allows you to see what they need, not just what you want to give.

Our communication amongst ourselves should be thoughtful and positive. Breathe! Think!

**We slow down, observe and breathe.  
Okay, do we actually get to say something now?**

Our preparation to become powerful communicators cannot be underestimated, for half of the communication battle is won as we prepare. Now as we begin to unfold our message we need to keep ourselves entirely in line with the spirit and content of that message.

Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something:

- 4) Notice you have a choice point, a fork in the road of which direction you want to go - reaction versus response. This is your "Point of Power to Choose."



## Complementarity, *Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine*, NPR

- (Narrator) *All they could think to do was run into the house and hug and cry, half in fear, half in gratitude and relief.*
- (Michael) *It was like a miracle.*
- (Narrator) *But was it a miracle or is there a better word for what happened that night? This is a professor at Michigan State University named Chris Hopwood. Chris spends his life looking at how people interact with each other. Specifically, he looks at something called "complementarity" and he does that by videotaping people talking.*
- (Chris) *How are people changing from moment to moment? So, we actually get a data point every half second during the course of a conversation.*
- (Narrator) *The basic idea of complementarity is that people very naturally mirror each other as they interact. So, warmth, 99 percent of the time, begets warmth, and likewise hostility begets hostility. Now, breaking this pattern, say being warm when somebody is really nasty, is called "non-complementary behavior" and it is really hard to do.*

React vs. respond, and we have the power to make a choice. The "point of power to choose" is looking at what is our reaction and what should our appropriate response be.

**Paul builds on - communicates with - their natural desire to worship and gives them something to consider within that thinking they had never before imagined - here is his "point of power:"**

**Acts 17:24-28:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup>nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; <sup>26</sup>and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

He presents them with a God bigger, more benevolent and reachable than any other they imagined.

<sup>27</sup>that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup>for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, for we also are His children.

It is possible to find God if you look for Him. He was not the "unknown god"

they were worshipping. His communication was taking their ignorance and turning it into a respectful opportunity.

In his time of waiting, he took the time to learn about and observe these people.

This truly is focusing on a point of power - to lift incomplete thinking to a higher spiritual level.

### **Apostle Paul communication lesson:**

*Communicating the paradigm shifting message of the gospel is best accomplished by positively lifting incomplete thinking and conclusions to a truly grander and higher spiritual level.*



 **Chess clock, *The Extract Obliteration, The Big Bang Theory* (Series 06, Episode 06)**

- (Leonard) *Is it possible we're having two different conversations?*
- (Sheldon) *How would I know? I'm not listening to you. (Laughter)*
- (Leonard) *(Puts chess time out of the box) Okay, here's what we're gonna do. Chess clock. We each get five minutes to talk about our problems. We'll take turns. (Places chess timer on the table) Each turn will consist of a statement and a helpful response from a friend. (Presses button) Begin.*
- (Sheldon) *I humiliated Stephen Hawking in a game of "Words with Friends." He stopped playing, and now we're not friends anymore.*
- (Leonard) *He's probably busy. You're worried about nothing. Give it a couple more days. I'm sure he'll play, and you'll see that everything's fine. (Presses button) My turn. I can't let Penny hand in a bad paper, but how do I tell her it's bad without letting her know that I read it?*
- (Sheldon) *Hmm. Beats me. (Presses button) Now, I know Hawking's not busy because I can see he's playing other people right now.*
- (Leonard) *Maybe since you're so good, he's taking his time to meet the challenge. (Presses button) I want Penny to enjoy school...*
- (Sheldon) *(Presses button) Wolowitz told me he's a big baby. But I didn't know that, and I played "extract" for 82 points. It's all Amy's fault. She told me to play it. I have to cut her loose.*
- (Leonard) *Sheldon, I wasn't done talking. (Presses button)*



**Practical Application:** Ministering to the church communication - body of Christ, the household of faith.

**This is different than fellowship as this communication goes beyond being able to understand one another and deals with the importance of keeping spiritual order in the church environment:**

**1 Thessalonians 2:9-12:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>*For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.* <sup>10</sup>*You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;* <sup>11</sup>*just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,* <sup>12</sup>*so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

Paul communicates his track record to show them his pure intention - a point of power! It was not about the Apostle Paul, it was about those he was ministering to. Paul communicated his track record to show them his pure intention. He was selfless, giving all he could to them.

The best communication is when I can leave how I feel out of it. What if you have an issue with your spouse? "I feel we should do it this way; you feel we should do it that way." Of course you have to discuss your feelings and that is important. But if you can create that discussion on a level that says, "I really want what is best for you first and for us," it will change how you feel and how it is presented. If you feel strongly about something, be honest about it, but



not in a way that crushes somebody. That is not communication; that is bullying which is not scriptural.

**The Corinthian church had issues of pride and poor leadership - Paul addressed them:**

1 Corinthians 4:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup>But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. <sup>20</sup>For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. <sup>21</sup>What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

Communication is not just spewing out words; it is the transferring of an idea, a concept that carries with it the power of change. That is what Paul was focused on. Paul's point of power is simple - the most trustworthy communication comes through action, not words. Too often words communicate pride and not principle.



My younger daughter came to me sheepishly and wanted to tell me something my older daughter did - she joined eHarmony. I was listening but did not hear. I thought she said my other daughter joined the army. I blew my stack! "Dad, it's okay." "What are you talking about? What do you mean, 'It's okay?'" "Dad, calm down. You are overreacting." "I am NOT overreacting. Did she at least talk to her brother? Why didn't she come talk to me? I can't be calm!" "Dad, it's a dating service!" "What!?" When she said it again and it clicked, we laughed and laughed. It was the classic "you hear something and just react."

**Finally, what is the secret to being able to communicate things that might be hard to hear?**

To communicate what we believe might be difficult truth, we need to first make sure we have listened to the circumstances, the thinking and beliefs that surround our audience. Listening tends to open minds into which we can (with grace) introduce new and contrary thoughts.

 **I quit, *The Extract Obliteration, The Big Bang Theory (Series 06, Episode 06)***

- (Leonard) *She hands in the paper tomorrow. I know I could help her. And she's my girlfriend; I should be allowed to help her. Why aren't I allowed to help her?*
- (Sheldon) *Yeah, I hear you, brother. (Presses button)*
- (Leonard) *No. (Presses button) You need to give me some advice.*
- (Sheldon) *Fine. Women, huh? (Presses button)*
- (Leonard) *(Presses button) Specific to my situation!*
- (Sheldon) *Blonde women, huh? (Presses button)*
- (Leonard) *(Presses button) Empathetic!*
- (Sheldon) *It sucks to be you. (Presses button)*
- (Leonard) *(Presses button) I quit. (Goes to his room)*
- (Sheldon) *Leonard, wait, no.*



Six simple steps when feeling triggered by someone or something:

- 5) Breathe and pause.
- 6) Choose a different response that is in alignment with your core values - such as experiencing greater peace, loving connection and joy.



**Breaking the cycle, *Disarming a Robbery with a Glass of Wine*, NPR**

- (Narrator) *But people do manage to sometimes behave in non-complementarity ways, and when they do it often completely shakes up a situation. It happens between people, but also it can happen on a bigger level.*
- (Chris) *The reason, for example, that we admire people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. is because they were able to maintain a sort of warmth and integrity in the face of people who are being cruel to them.*
- (Narrator) *The march in Selma, nonviolence in India, offering a man with a gun at your head a glass of French wine - those aren't miracles. They're examples of non-complementarity behavior. So, remember those people at the dinner party? Later that evening after everything had calmed down they would find this glass neatly placed on the sidewalk by their alley. Not thrown, not carelessly discarded - placed.*

The man walked away with respect and honor because he was treated like a lost human being.

The Lord taught us this concept back in the Old Testament:

Proverbs 15:1: (NIV) *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*



That was another concept I used when my children were growing up - they could not make me mad. The more they tried, the softer I would get and they could not fight it. It is hard to do!

Paul's previous reference to their own poets was another natural break (breathe and pause) in his communication, as he reminded them of his respect for their culture and understanding of what they considered important.

**Paul now builds his main (and difficult) message of hope which is twofold:**

Acts 17:29-34: (NASB) <sup>29</sup>*Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.*  
<sup>30</sup>*Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,*

He corrected them in such a kind, gentle and fascinating manner that they were listening. First point: They had been worshipping in error and ignorance having made God into an image created by their own hands. Worshipping - right idea - idols - wrong execution!

<sup>31</sup>*because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*

Second point: All of their errors and ignorance would come to righteous judgment by the living God that Paul had proclaimed, and the raising of Jesus was proof of his proclamation. We need to give our piety and reference to *this* God, because He is THE God of all things. Paul communicated! He got a difficult message out.



### What was the response?

<sup>32</sup>Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, we shall hear you again concerning this. <sup>33</sup>So Paul went out of their midst. <sup>34</sup>But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

The results were mixed, but we do not think that Paul was disappointed. Convincing a massive audience that everything they had been doing to this point was wrong would have been unlikely. They had no basis of Judaism to stand on, so they did not understand the concept of one God. They were miles away from the truth Paul had given them. The fact that some believed was a success. The fact that some sneered was a success - because it means they heard him. The communication worked, and that is what he was there to do.

All we can do is express the point, the value, the importance, getting out of our own way. What someone does with our message is not our job. We just have to deliver the goods intact.



### Hail, *How to Speak So That People Want to Listen*, Julian Treasure, TED Talk

- I'd like to suggest that there are four really powerful cornerstones - foundations - that we can stand on if we want our speech to be powerful and to make change in the world. Fortunately, these things spell a word. The word is "hail," and it has a great definition as well. I'm not talking about the stuff that falls from the sky and hits you on the head. I'm talking about this definition, "to greet or acclaim enthusiastically," which is how I think our words will be received if we stand on these four things. So, what do they stand for? The 'H', honesty, of course, being true in what you say, being straight and clear. The 'A' is authenticity, just being yourself. A friend of mine described it as standing in your own truth, which I think is a lovely



*way to put it. The 'I' is integrity, being your word, actually doing what you say, and being somebody people can trust. And the 'L' is love. I don't mean romantic love, but I do mean wishing people well, for two reasons. First of all, I think absolute honesty may not be what we want. I mean, my goodness, you look ugly this morning. Perhaps that's not necessary. Tempered with love, of course, honesty is a great thing. But also, if you're really wishing somebody well, it's very hard to judge them at the same time.*

(Source: Eight Secrets of Great Communicators, July 19, 2016, Forbes.com, Travis Bradberry)  
Active listening is a simple technique that ensures people feel heard, an essential component of good communication. To practice:

- Spend more time listening than you do talking.
- Do not answer questions with questions.
- Avoid finishing other people's sentences.
- Focus more on the other person than you do on yourself.
- Focus on what people are saying right now, not on what their interests are.
- Reframe what the other person has said to make sure you understand him or her correctly. ("So, you're telling me that this budget needs further consideration, right?")
- Think about what you're going to say after someone has finished speaking, not while he or she is speaking.
- Ask plenty of questions.
- Never interrupt.

Be clear and concise. Listen. Pause. Prepare appropriately so your communication can be of great value. We hope our discussion on communication can change the way you live.

*So, why doesn't anyone listen to me?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



First, some great communication quotes:

*The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.*

*— Sydney J. Harris*

*To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well.*

*— John Marshall*

*First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak. — Epictetus*

*Words of comfort, skillfully administered, are the oldest therapy known to man. — Louis Nizer*



Next, a deeper look into the words that are translated *communicate* in the King James Bible:

**Communicate:** Strong's #2842 from 2844; partnership, i.e. (literally) participation or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction

Acts 2:42: (KJV) *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship <2842>**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Romans 15:26: (KJV) *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution <2842>** for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*

**Partakers:** Strong's #2844 from 2839; a sharer, i.e. associate

Matthew 23:30: (KJV) *And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been **partakers <2844>** with them in the blood of the prophets.*

1 Corinthians 10:20: (KJV) *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have **fellowship <2844>** with devils.*

**Communicate with:** Strong's #4790 from 4862 and 2841; to share in company with, i.e. co-participate in

#### All uses:

Ephesians 5:11: (KJV) *And have no **fellowship <4790>** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

Philippians 4:14: (KJV) *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did **communicate with <4790>** my affliction.*

Revelation 18:4: (KJV) *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye be not **partakers <4790>** of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

**Communicate:** Strong's #2843 from 2844; communicative, i.e. (pecuniarily) liberal

#### Only use:

1 Timothy 6:18: (KJV) *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to **distribute, willing to communicate <2843>**;*

**Distributing:** Strong's #2841 from 2844; to share with others (objectively or subjectively)

Romans 12:13: (KJV) ***Distributing <2841>** to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

1 Timothy 5:22: (KJV) *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be **partaker <2841>** of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*

These words carry the sense of participation in another's life and not merely contributing to it. They seem to imply an understanding - a sense of "being on the same page."



Next, a few more references to the practical applications of our communication lessons:

### **Personal family communication - spouses, children:**

Ephesians 6:1-4: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. <sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

### **Personal fellowship communication - body of Christ, the household of faith:**

1 Thessalonians 5:8-15: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. <sup>12</sup>But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, <sup>13</sup>and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. <sup>14</sup>We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. <sup>15</sup>See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

### **Personal character witnessing communication:**

Colossians 4:2-6: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; <sup>3</sup>praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; <sup>4</sup>that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

### **Public Gospel communication:**

Acts 11:19-24: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. <sup>20</sup>But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup>The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; <sup>24</sup>for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

Romans 10:10-15: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him; <sup>13</sup>for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. <sup>13</sup>How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup>How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!



(Source: Eight Secrets of Great Communicators, July 19, 2016, Forbes.com, Travis Bradberry) When it comes to communication, we all tend to think we're pretty good at it. Truth is, even those of us who are good communicators aren't nearly as good as we think we are. This overestimation of our ability to communicate is magnified when interacting with people we know well.

Researchers at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business put this theory to the test and what they discovered is startling. In the study, the researchers paired subjects with people they knew well and then again with people they'd never met. The researchers discovered that people who knew each other well understood each other no better than people who'd just met! Even worse, participants frequently overestimated their ability to communicate, and this was more pronounced with people they knew well.

"Our problem in communicating with friends is that we have an illusion of insight," said study co-author Nicholas Epley. "Getting close to someone appears to create the illusion of understanding more than actual understanding."

When communicating with people we know well, we make presumptions about what they understand—presumptions that we don't dare make with strangers. This tendency to overestimate how well we communicate (and how well we're understood) is so prevalent that psychologists even have a name for it: closeness-communication bias.

"The understanding, 'What I know is different from what you know' is essential for effective communication," said study lead Kenneth Savitsky, "but that insight can be elusive. Some [people] may indeed be on the same wavelength, but maybe not as much as they think. You get rushed and preoccupied, and you stop taking the perspective of the other person."

#### Taking Action:

Communication is the real work of leadership; you simply can't become a great leader until you are a great communicator. Great communicators inspire people. They create a connection that is real, emotional, and personal. And great communicators forge this connection through an understanding of people and an ability to speak directly to their needs in a manner that they are ready to hear.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." -George Bernard Shaw

The eight strategies that follow will help you to overcome the communication bias that tends to hold us back with everyone we encounter, especially those we know well. Apply these strategies and watch your communication skills reach new heights.

#### 1. Speak to groups as individuals.

As a leader, you often have to speak to groups of people. Whether a small team meeting or a company-wide gathering, you need to develop a level of intimacy in your approach that makes each individual in the room feel as if you're speaking directly to him or her. The trick is to eliminate the distraction of the crowd so that you can deliver your message just as you would if you were talking to a single person. You want to be emotionally genuine and exude the same feelings, energy, and attention you would one-on-one (as opposed to the anxiety that comes with being in front of people). The ability to pull this off is the hallmark of great leadership communication.

#### 2. Talk so people will listen.

Great communicators read their audience (groups and individuals) carefully to ensure they aren't wasting their breath on a message that people aren't ready to hear. Talking so people will listen means you adjust your message on the fly to stay with your audience (what they're ready to hear and how they're ready to hear it). Droning on to ensure you've said what you wanted to say does not have the same effect on people as engaging them in a meaningful dialogue in which there is an exchange of ideas. Resist the urge to drive your point home at all costs. When your talking leads to people asking good questions, you know you're on the right track.



### 3. Listen so people will talk.

One of the most disastrous temptations for a leader is to treat communication as a one-way street. When you communicate, you must give people ample opportunity to speak their minds. If you find that you're often having the last word in conversations, then this is likely something you need to work on.

Listening isn't just about hearing words; it's also about listening to the tone, speed, and volume of the voice. What is being said? Anything not being said? What hidden messages below the surface exist? When someone is talking to you, stop everything else and listen fully until the other person has finished speaking. When you are on a phone call, don't type an email. When you're meeting with someone, close the door and sit near the person so you can focus and listen. Simple behaviors like these will help you stay in the present moment, pick up on the cues the other person sends, and make it clear that you will really hear what he or she is saying.

### 4. Connect emotionally.

Maya Angelou said it best: "People will forget what you said and did, but they will never forget how you made them feel." As a leader, your communication is impotent if people don't connect with it on an emotional level. This is hard for many leaders to pull off because they feel they need to project a certain persona. Let that go. To connect with your people emotionally, you need to be transparent. Be human. Show them what drives you, what you care about, what makes you get out of bed in the morning. Express these feelings openly, and you'll forge an emotional connection with your people.

### 5. Read body language.

Your authority makes it hard for people to say what's really on their minds. No matter how good a relationship you have with your subordinates, you are kidding yourself if you think they are as open with you as they are with their peers. So, you must become adept at understanding unspoken messages. The greatest wealth of information lies in people's body language. The body communicates nonstop and is an abundant source of information, so purposefully watch body language during meetings and casual conversation. Once you tune into body language, the messages will become loud and clear. Pay as much attention to what isn't said as what is said, and you'll uncover facts and opinions that people are unwilling to express directly.

### 6. Prepare your intent.

A little preparation goes a long way toward saying what you wanted to say and having a conversation achieve its intended impact. Don't prepare a speech; develop an understanding of what the focus of a conversation needs to be (in order for people to hear the message) and how you will accomplish this. Your communication will be more persuasive and on point when you prepare your intent ahead of time.

### 7. Skip the jargon.

The business world is filled with jargon and metaphors that are harmless when people can relate to them. Problem is, most leaders overuse jargon and alienate their subordinates and customers with their "business speak." Use it sparingly if you want to connect with your people. Otherwise, you'll come across as insincere.

### 8. Practice active listening.

Active listening is a simple technique that ensures people feel heard, an essential component of good communication. To practice active listening:

- Spend more time listening than you do talking.
- Do not answer questions with questions.
- Avoid finishing other people's sentences.
- Focus more on the other person than you do on yourself.
- Focus on what people are saying right now, not on what their interests are.



- Reframe what the other person has said to make sure you understand him or her correctly (“So you’re telling me that this budget needs further consideration, right?”)
- Think about what you’re going to say after someone has finished speaking, not while he or she is speaking.
- Ask plenty of questions.
- Never interrupt.
- Don’t take notes.

#### Bringing It All Together

As you work to employ these strategies, try to avoid biting off more than you can chew. Working on one to three strategies at a time is sufficient. If you try to take on more than you can handle, you’re not going to see as much progress as you would if you narrowed your focus. Once you become effective in one particular strategy, you can take on another one in its place. Communication is a dynamic element of leadership that is intertwined in most of what you do each day. You’ll have ample opportunity to improve your abilities in this critical skill.