

Leadership Tips Communication



Office of Student Life
AND Cultural Centers

for the student leader

Communication in Groups

Communication is the vascular system of any organization. It controls the flow of all kinds of information to essential parts of the group. One definition for communication is to share equal meanings--this is the bottom line outcome for talking, writing, reading, meeting, speaking or listening. Breakdowns in communication happen when we think we share equal meaning but really don't. "I thought she said..." or "I thought I told him..." are common ways of saying "I didn't understand - we didn't share equal meaning."

Through sharing equal meaning, we are able to grow to be effective groups--accomplishing tasks and forming relationships. One way to help share equal meanings is through co-orientation. This process is described by *four* theorists.

George Mead says it is imaginatively taking the role of the other person.

Theodore Newcombe describes this as being oriented simultaneously to the other person and subject of the discussion.

Anthony Wallace says we use equal meanings to predict behavior of others thus co-orienting ourselves with them. Much of our communication as leaders is accomplished by being an efficient listener and giving feedback effectively. These skills help us create equal meanings and learn about the people we are working with. Below are some tips.

"Life is chronicle of friendship. Friends create the world anew each day. Without their loving care, courage would not suffice to keep hearts strong for life."

Helen Keller

Giving Feedback

- Includes genuine compliments as well as constructive criticism.
- Be deceptive of behavior if feedback is negative, try to make the other feel like it is not a personal slur.
- Feedback should include ways the other can change or improve.
- Give feedback immediately, we sometimes wait to gain courage to say something critical to someone else.
- Allow the other person to respond to your comments, this is a two way process.
- Feedback should not be a "release".
- For whomever is giving it -- it is of value to the receiver.
- Feedback is continuous, ongoing.
- Feedback deals with the specifics of "here and now".

Listening Effectively

- Practice empathy, feel things as the other person might.
- Be active, remember what the person talking has to say.
- Suspend judgment.
- Check for clarity (*repeat what the speaker has said*).
- Avoid distraction such as the outside noise, others interrupting your conversation.
- Be aware of your own biases.
- Do *not* interrupt.
- Hearing ideas that conflicts with your own should be seen as hearing another view rather than a personal attack.

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