



HUNDRED
LIFE DESIGN

**6 WAYS TO COMMUNICATE
MORE EFFECTIVELY**



THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE MEANINGFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS A LEADER CAN HAVE. WHETHER YOU'RE WORKING WITH AN INDIVIDUAL OR A SMALL GROUP, AND WHETHER YOU'RE LISTENING OR SPEAKING, YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION PLAYS A LARGE ROLE IN HOW OTHERS PERCEIVE YOU, SO IT'S A KEY SKILL TO HAVE IN YOUR BACK POCKET AS YOU STRIVE FOR SUCCESS. HERE ARE SIX WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS MORE EFFECTIVELY.

1. POSITION YOURSELF TOWARD THE PERSON YOU'RE INTERACTING WITH.

One of the easiest ways to show interest in another person is to position yourself facing them. Studies have shown that we often point our feet, especially our dominant foot (typically the right) toward the person we're interested in engaging with. By angling your feet and body toward the person you're communicating with, you can nonverbally show them that you're interested in what they have to say.

2. NOD AND SMILE AS YOU LISTEN.

It might sound simple, but a genuine smile and an occasional nod of the head can be enough to show that you care and are interested in a conversation. Maintain eye contact without staring, and continue showing that you're engaged. To bring things up a notch, you can even ask an occasional relevant question if you need clarification or are interested in a topic the speaker has brought up.



3. MIND YOUR POSTURE.

We communicate a lot with our body language. When we feel uncomfortable, we sometimes “fold up” by crossing our arms or legs, or by shifting away from our conversation partner. Instead, make sure you appear “open” and attentive. Stand up correctly with your shoulders back, and relax as much as possible while remaining alert and engaged.

4. PUT AWAY THE PHONE.

No one wants to feel like they’re playing second fiddle—especially not to your cell phone or electronic devices. For some of us, it can be hard to disconnect completely, but taking your eyes off the screen for a while is a great way to improve your personal communication. While someone else speaks, there should be no texting, checking your emails, or pausing to take a call or hear a voicemail.

5. WAIT TO SPEAK.

Talking is a dialogue, not a monologue. Give others time to talk, and wait until they are done before speaking. Along the same lines, however, don’t forget to listen actively: you should give their insights your full attention, rather than distractedly composing your thoughts and waiting for your turn to share them.

6. DON’T APPEAR TIRED OR DISTRACTED.

We all have those days when we haven’t slept, we’re low on energy, and we’re a little off our game. But in terms of personal communication, it’s important to show that you’re interested in the conversation, which means you shouldn’t be yawning or glancing around the room. You might know you’re simply tired, not bored, but the other person will interpret your body language as indifference.

Communication isn’t always easy, and at times it may even feel awkward or unnatural. But practicing these tips will help. Simply paying attention to your own body, and considering how your body language and interest level will be perceived by others, can go a long way toward improving your communication. Need a communication or speech coach?

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