

Communicate to Collaborate

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Introductions – at your table

- Name
- One course you are enjoying
- What you hope to get out of this session today – why did you pick it?

Introduce me and then have the tables introduce themselves to each other

Time

5 minutes

Supplies needed

Objectives

- Identify elements of communication that impact how we work with others
 - Intrapersonal
 - Nonverbal
 - Listening
 - Speaking

Time

2 minutes

Supplies needed

Activity

Each group should choose:

- 1 person to be a leader
- 2 people to be blindfolded – builders
- All others will be observers

Leaders come to the front of the room for further directions, all other group members will receive direction from their team leader.

Set up the room into groups of four (minimum), give the group one minute to decide who will be the leader, who will be the builders and who will be the observer. We need 1 leader 2 builders and the rest can be observers. Make sure to inform the group builders will be blindfolded for the table activity.

Tell the leaders to come to the front of the room for the rest of the instructions.

Leader instructions

- You will lead your team to build a tower, however you are restricted by a few rules:
- Two members at your table are builders, they are the only ones who can touch the materials and build the tower.
- The other members of the group are observers and will fill out the observation sheet as the builders work. They are not allowed to speak during the activity.
- You are to provide all instructions for your group
- Builders must be blindfolded.
- Builders can only use one hand, the other must remain under the table at all times.
- If one of the builders has an issue with being blindfolded, have that person swap roles with the observer.
- You will have 7 minutes to explain the rules and complete the task. There will be a timer on the screen.

Hand out prediction sheet and ask the leaders to make a prediction. Once all leaders have made their prediction, hand out the supplies and instruct them to take the supplies back to their table and get started.

Leader Supplies:

- Blocks
- Blindfolds
- Observation sheets
- Prediction sheets

Activity – Building Session 1

- As the leaders return to their seat tell the group the leaders will give them the rest of their instructions, they have 7 minutes to complete the activity.
- Set timer and begin activity
- Pass out measuring tapes near the end of the time
- As soon as the timer ends, tell the groups to measure their tower and record their results.
- Have the observers share what they saw during the activity with their group and then share out to the larger group.
- Ask for leaders/builders to share their experience

Guiding Questions

- What were you thinking before, during and after the activity?
- What did you tell yourself as you were guiding or following directions?
- What was your strategy?
- What were you feeling throughout the activity?
- How did your leader provide guidance?
- How did your leader provide feedback when you were doing things correctly or incorrectly?
- What information did you feel you were missing?
- Did you adjust any rules?
- What would have made this activity more successful?

Transition

While this was a really fun activity, there was actually a purpose for us taking time to build with blocks. We want to look at how all the elements of communication that we were experiencing impacted how successful we were in the group activity. I want to take a look at four elements of communication and then unravel how being aware of these can help amplify your leadership skills.

Time

15 minutes

Supplies needed

Building Blocks

Blindfolds

Measuring tapes

Post-it notes (for predictions)

Observation sheets

Intrapersonal communication

Storytelling – share your passion. Connect what you feel and what you think to the message you are trying to express.

The first element that is often overlooked is our intrapersonal communication, or what we are saying to ourselves while we work in a group on a project or even in our daily conversations with people around us.

Six months ago, my best friend was admitted to the hospital. She was suffering from the same illness that one in five people struggle with on a daily basis. She needed help in order to survive, and the hospital was the only place to get it. The caveat to this, was the disease she needed help with was a mental illness, and due to the structure of her health insurance, she struggles to afford the help she needs. This is why I believe we need to reevaluate our health insurance system and find an affordable approach to help people who are suffering.

Sharing this story with you, helps demonstrate how I can take a debatable topic and force you to connect with your emotions. Had I started my argument “We need a better health insurance system because people can’t afford to get the help they need” you probably wouldn’t have felt as much of a connection with my story.

This is exactly why identify why something is important to you is so important in communication. If you want to deliver a meaningful and memorable message, you have

to cut through all the other noise around us and pull your audience in to your message space.

Time

5 minutes

Supplies needed

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbals govern how others think about us,
but nonverbal also govern how we think and feel
about ourselves.

-Amy Cuddy

Cuddy, A. (2012, June). Amy Cuddy: Your body language shapes who you are [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en

In her 2012 talk, *Your body language shapes who you are*, Amy Cuddy explores the idea of how your body language can not only effect what people think about you, but also how you think about yourself.

She runs a series of tests that examine various poses – categorized by high power and low power – and evaluates the impact these different poses have on a person in a job interview. What she finds is that people who take these high-power poses before they enter an interview are much more likely to get a job than people who engage in low power poses.

While no one takes the stance of low power poses intentionally, many of us engage in this type of stance all throughout our day. This pose includes hunching over our phones or other technology, tightening up our body as we sit, crossing legs, putting your hands on your neck, anything that makes you close up.

Why I bring this up is because we have all heard how our facial expressions, how we stand, what we do with our hands and so on impact how people perceive our message, but if we are truly going to deliver a powerful message, we have to consider how our actions can also impact the perception we have of ourselves – even if we don't

recognize it as it is happening.

Transition

So we have talked a lot about how we need to be aware of ourselves to communicate as leaders, but now let's take a look at some ways that how we communicate with others impacts our leadership.

Time

10 minutes

Supplies needed

Speaking

How do we sustain conversation with people we like, and people we don't?

[10 ways to have a better conversation](#)

Consider this question as you watch this Ted talk by Celeste Headlee

Time

15 minutes

Supplies needed

[10 ways to have a better conversation video](#)

10 ways to have a better conversation

1. Don't multitask – Be present
2. Don't pontificate – Be open to what people have to say, set aside your opinion, **assume you have something to learn**
3. Use open-ended questions
4. Go with the flow
5. If you don't know, say that you don't know
6. Don't equate your experience with theirs
7. Try not to repeat yourself
8. Stay out of the weeds – don't worry about the little details
9. Listen
10. Be Brief

Headlee, C. (2015, May). Celeste Headlee: 10 ways to have a better conversation [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation?language=en

Well, that's a lot to digest! I want to look at a few of these points that Celeste makes that really stood out to me.

Number 2 – don't pontificate, always assume you have something to learn.

- Why do you think this could be challenging?
- Have you ever experienced a conversation where you were trying to provide an opinion and the other person wasn't open to hearing about it?
- How did you respond?
- Have you ever been the person who wasn't open to hearing about someone else's opinion?
- Why do you think it is so important that we remain open to other people's thoughts, beliefs or ideas?

Number 5 – If you don't know, say you don't know

Why do you think we are so apprehensive to admit we don't know something?

Number 6 – Don't equate your experience with theirs

How do you feel about that one?

Do you think you do it?

I started being more aware of when I do this, and have tried to be more mindful. Just the other day I got an email from my cousin telling me about her pregnancy so far, and my immediate reaction was to start relating my personal experiences to hers. Now let me clarify that I have never been pregnant before. I don't have children of my own, but for some reason, my immediate reaction was that I completely understood what she felt and the best way to show empathy would be to relate her experiences to other areas of my life. As I was writing the email, I recognized that I was doing this and went back and stripped out every part of the email that talked about me and do you know what happened? My email went from five paragraphs to one. Definitely made me think more about my interactions with others.

Leadership relation –

How do you feel when someone asks you about you? How do you think these rules could help grow your leadership skills?

Time

10 minutes

Supplies needed

Listening

"Most people do not listen with the intent to **understand**, they **listen** with the intent to reply."

-Stephen R. Covey

One of the elements Celeste mentioned in her talk was listening. She recited one of my favorite quotes from Stephen Covey, "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply."

- How do we move from listening with the intent to reply, to listening with an intent to understand?
- Why do we feel we have to immediately respond to someone when they ask a question?
- What would the repercussions of thinking before we speak be?

Time

5 minutes

Supplies needed

What is listening?

“Making meaning out of sound”

-Julian Treasure

Treasure, J. (2011, July). *Julian Treasure: 5 ways to listen better* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better#t-177547

Julian Treasure defines listening in his 2011 TED talk as “making meaning out of sound”.

How can we make meaning out of sound if we are so busy coming up with the next thing to say?

Time

2 minutes

Supplies needed

How will you change?

Write one communication goal on your notecard and what you will do to achieve that goal.

Time

5 minutes

Supplies needed

Notecards

Markers

Leadership Videos

- [Learning to be awesome at anything you do, including being a leader](#)

Supplemental video, if needed