

## 10 Tips to Build Strong, Positive Relationships

- ✓ **Speak to people:** There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
- ✓ **Smile at people:** It takes 72 muscles to frown, but only 14 to smile.
- ✓ **Call people by name:** The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of their own name used properly and positively.
- ✓ **Be friendly and helpful:** To make a friend, you must be a friend.
- ✓ **Be cordial:** Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.



- ✓ **Be genuinely interested in people:** You can find things to like in almost anybody if you try.
- ✓ **Be generous with praise,** cautious with criticism.
- ✓ **Be considerate** with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other person's, and the truth.
- ✓ **Watch for opportunities to give service:** What counts most in life is what we do for others.
- ✓ **Practice your positive sense of humor:** The kind that is about telling funny stories about yourself, not other people.

## Probing Techniques



One of the most common ways of probing is to ask an open question, such as:

- “Can you describe that more clearly?”
- “Would you give me a specific example of what you mean?”
- “What do you think we should do?”



Be thoughtful about what and how you ask. Consider how many probes you really need to offer.



A fourth method is paraphrasing in your own words. An example: “So if I understand you correctly, you...”



A second, very effective way of probing is a pause. Stop talking. Let the other person fill the silence.



The last method, is the summary question. Example: “You have tried ignoring the scent of your colleague’s cologne, you have talked with him about how it affects your allergies, and you have tried shutting your door to keep the scent from your workspace. None of these has worked and now you are asking me to intervene. Have I got it right?”



A third way is to ask a reflective or mirroring question. For example, let’s say the person has just said, “What I really want is more variety in my work.” You may respond by just reflecting back to them, “Variety?”

## 5 Delivery Strategies for Success



- ✓ Use direct language and deliver a message that is clear, calm, and direct.
- ✓ Factual descriptions and relevant details are more likely to be heard.
- ✓ Use repetition respectfully and to keep things on track.
- ✓ Be aware of your nonverbal messages.
- ✓ Check for understanding.

## 6 Ideas for Becoming a Better Listener



**Make a decision to listen.** Close your mind to clutter and noise and look at the person speaking with you. Give them your undivided attention.



**Don't interrupt people.** Make it a habit to let them finish what they are saying. Respect that they have thoughts they are processing and speaking about, and wait to ask questions or make comments until they have finished.



Keep your eyes focused on the speaker and your ears tuned to their voice. Don't let your eyes wander around the room, just in case your attention does too.



Carry a notebook or start a conversation file on your computer. Write down all the discussions that you have in a day. Capture the subject, who spoke more (were you listening or doing a lot of the talking?), what you learned in the discussion, as well as the who, what, when, where, why, and how aspects of it. Once you have conducted this exercise 8-10 times, you will be able to see what level your listening skills are currently at.



Ask a few questions throughout the conversation. When you ask, people will know that you are listening to them, and that you are interested in what they have to say. Your ability to summarize and paraphrase will also demonstrate that you heard them.



When you demonstrate good listening skills, they tend to be infectious. If you want people to communicate well, you have to set a high example.

## What is Said and What is Heard

What we say is not always what the other person hears. Our message goes through a complicated system of filters and outside influences before it reaches the recipient. We must always clarify that the person has received the message that we intended to send.



**What is said?**



**Speaker's Biases**

- Body Language
- Tone of voice
- Words
- Expressions



**Listener's Biases**

- Past experiences
- Maps of reality
- Education
- Assumptions
- Emotional state
- Distractions



**What is heard?**