

## Communication Ideas

In our customer services class I always go over communication principles before I talk about the nice things to do to make a customer comfortable. One of the things that I like to stress in conversations with others is not to make people wrong. The principle is that when you make a person wrong or make them feel stupid they close down the communication and will in turn make the sender wrong.

What I do in class is have everyone say nice and loud "STUPID" then I say something like "didn't we go over this before" the class yells out stupid because that is what other person hears. When the receiver hears the word "Stupid" they are not going to continue listening to the rest of the conversation. Usually when people hear how it sounds to others they become aware of what the other person hears.

Supervisors do it to their employees. "We need to be professional about this" STUPID.

On a family level: Putting on the breaks on the passenger's side of the car can send a nonverbal message to the driver "you're a bad driver" they will then attack you.

If you ever hear yourself saying things like this stop and say I didn't mean to say that, that way.

Here is a short list of statements that make people feel stupid. Remember that the manner in which it is said can make the difference.

Didn't I tell you this before?

Use common sense.

Do I have to tell you this again?

Is this how I asked you to do it?

You call this work?

We should always get to our appointment on time. (Condescending voice)

What time do you think it is?

Do you think I have nothing else to do but wait for you?

If you have any others that you hear let me know and I will pass them on to others.

## RESPONCES

I received a lot of responses from people who sent out things that make us feel stupid. These are a few of the ones I received. We hear these in the office and at home to employees, clients and family.

I hope you have a great week.

Paul

"It was in the handout."

"It's on the sign."

"It's in the book."

"You're supposed to be [somewhere else -- the next window, another class, another building]."

"You should have thought of that before we left!" (And didn't we all get that from our parents!)

Can't you follow a few simple directions?

Anyone should be able to do this without any help.

I can't understand why you're not finished

Why do you always have to make such a big project out of everything ?

"We went over this before."

"I showed you how to do that yesterday."

Especially in response to a computer question. Very intimidating to older people.

"You are the weakest link, good-bye!"

What part of "pick-up your toys" did you not understand?

How many times do we have to go over that?

What were you thinking?

We don't pay you to think.

Because I say so/because I am the boss.

If I wanted your opinion ... ( various endings)

And your point is?

Getting your paycheck should be enough recognition.

I already told you that.

Gosh, I thought everyone knew that.

Are you done yet?

How come you don't get it?

You are the only one who doesn't know this.

How many times do I have to tell you this?

It was in an email.

I guess I'll have to do it myself.

And a few comments:

I agree that how a person is approached and the words we choose to use when speaking to that person determine the demeanor that person will take in handling a situation. My rule of thumb is "50% of the stress in a relationship is one person's fault and 50% of the outcome in mending a relationship is one person's responsibility." No one person is always right 100% of the time and every one needs to walk away feeling like they have been heard, understood and that their feelings matter. Approaching a problem with the intent of having a positive outcome, rather than placing blame or trying to get something off one's chest, is the ideal. I guess part of my job as a case manager is to help the client to become more responsible and accountable for their actions and helping them to see that their inaction or their inappropriate action affects other people and not just

themselves. If I do this in a kind way, my client is more likely to respond positively also and try to change her habits to become more responsible. I feel Employment Services Case Managers must refrain from being judgmental or condescending to our clients. If we do not adopt this attitude, we defeat our purpose before we even get started.

This is a great topic. We've all had unpleasant experiences with a hostile people and we've also all been on the other side generating the hostile energy. Sometimes, its not the words that are spoken but the tone of voice that sends the negative message.

Generally speaking, I think people who feel genuinely good about themselves are less likely to demean others. When one's self-esteem is in tact, its not necessary to always be "right" or to play the "I told you so" game.

It's a lot easier to have a compassionate attitude towards others when you truly love yourself. Compassion requires courage, which an insecure person may not have.

Unfortunately, many of our participants (and perhaps co-workers/supervisors)have not developed a strong sense of self love.