



conscious COMMUNICATION for business

By Linda Williams

Is verbal communication a challenge in any of your business relationships? Is there at least one “challenge” person with whom you would like to have easier, smoother interactions? Who comes to mind at work: a boss, colleague, vendor, or client?

Most people want the same things from verbal interactions: for the other person to listen to them, to allow them to safely express feelings and desires, and to be treated with respect. To achieve these results, we need to become aware of our own behaviors and how to modify them through steps that foster mutual growth and understanding.

Communication is situational. Within each exchange, we co-create the interaction moment by moment, allowing opportunities to learn and grow. We are each other’s teachers.

Are we conscious communicators in our business environment? “Conscious” is defined as being “present” during the interaction, being aware of our environment, thoughts, and actions, and not reacting or judging. It is listening with curiosity. What messages and feelings are being expressed? We are partners in this communication dance with our “challenge” person. If one of us changes the familiar steps in this dance, then the pattern is broken.

Many of us have come to accept that we cannot change the other person. However, we do have the power to change our own thoughts and behavior, thereby influencing the culture at our workplace. It really is an individual choice. Each of us can contribute to a work environment to help ensure “conscious” communication continues to grow and flourish.

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”—Gandhi

This “must” is the individual commitment to change.

How You Can Make a Difference

In the process of developing a more conscious communication style, you become more self aware, you can choose to speak your truth, you can modulate your tone of voice or body language to better reflect your true intentions, and you can choose to “pause” during any interaction instead of losing your composure.

The following agreements, which I developed and copyrighted in 2008, are a basic blueprint for the communication lessons you can learn by observing both yourself and others. One of

your core intentions can be the adoption of a win-win perspective by acknowledging each person’s freedom of expression and then really listening to the different points of view. This new attitude permits the recognition of each person’s individual truth without having to adopt the other’s truth as your own.

The 12 Communication Agreements©

1. I accept responsibility for what I say, how I say it, and how I feel.
2. I identify my true communication intentions.
3. I express clear, complete messages and appreciations.
4. I acknowledge the feelings of others without having to agree with them.
5. I honor my needs and the needs of others.
6. I listen in order to recognize and respond to the needs behind what others say to me.
7. I use open-ended questions to encourage communication.
8. I value my right to make requests and the right of others to make requests.
9. I consider my body language.
10. I monitor my tone of voice.
11. I choose to react or respond in any situation.
12. I apply these skills to each interaction each day.

Into Action

Here are examples for three of the 12 Communication Agreements.

Agreement 2. I identify my true communication intentions.

Based on previous experience, I feel that a specific conversation with my “challenge” coworker might be difficult. So instead of finding her and launching into an ambush, as I have in the past, I can set the stage for this important conversation. I can state the topic of what I want to discuss, estimate about how much time we might need, and invite her into the scheduling decision.

“Jean, I want to discuss the customer service policies with you. When do you have 30 minutes open tomorrow or Wednesday? I am interested in sharing our points of view.”

This gives advanced notice for thinking about the topic and invites more readiness for a conversation. When the meeting is in progress, remember to focus on the “different points of view” being expressed, rather than judging. You can always say, “I see (think about, remember it) differently.” In fact, conflict is about different perspectives, values, information, etc. Your judgment about differences contributes to a negative emotional reaction from the other party.

Agreement 3. I express clear, complete messages and appreciations.

You want to improve the quality of your relationship with a specific person. Your “challenge” coworker finishes a work-related task. Instead of just saying, “Thanks, Joe” or “Thank you,” you can always be specific about what he did (actions), how you feel (in relationship to the actions), and how it helped the work environment (needs and values).

“Joe, I appreciate the charts you prepared for the monthly report. I feel grateful for your willingness to meet the timeline. Your attention to detail contributes to the success of

our company. Thank you.”

Agreement 11. I chose to react or respond in any situation.

My “challenge” coworker and I have a pattern of interaction that makes me feel frustrated and then angry. I go into a mode of offensive attack behavior in which it looks like my head is shaking “NO” while she is talking, and my tone is sarcastic when I speak. I want to change my pattern. Before we meet again, I will work on responding rather than reacting. I can learn to click on ‘Pause’ because it is impossible to click the ‘Delete’ button after the interaction. I can also “Pause” right in the middle of the behavior I am trying to change.

I can say, “Ann, I just heard how I sound and I don’t like it. I have been working on changing my behavior. So I am sorry for my tone and body language. I would like to come back later and continue the discussion with you in a different way. Would an hour from now work for you?”

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.”

—Gandhi

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

with Rev. Marla Sanderson



Marla Sanderson has been a student of spiritual practice for more than 35 years. She began as Assistant Director of The Next Step, a psychic and spiritual community in a New Mexico ghost town. As workshop leader, teacher, practitioner, and minister, she has led relationship and personal growth workshops, taught psychic development and meditation, Living Love, and the Science of Mind. Marla is available for workshops and speaking engagements. She recently founded the New Thought Center for Creative Living. www.newthoughtctr.org

Conscious Business and the Creative Connection

The Science of Mind teaches us that we create our reality with our thoughts and that there is an Infinite Creative Intelligence within us that knows all. We can tap into that intelligence and be guided by its wisdom. When there are decisions and choices to make, this same Power is full of ideas and solutions. We only need to tune in to it.

So it’s no wonder when I learned to apply the Science of Mind techniques and meditate regularly, I became eager to get out of my boring job and on to a more exciting life.

The return on investment of changing your behavior at work is that these same agreements can easily transfer to your personal life. Imagine that the quality of your professional and personal relationships improves one interaction at a time. Then the 12 Communication Agreements can change from “I” to “We.”

“We” are now consciously being the change we wish to see in the world.

Linda Williams is an experienced consultant and teacher of skills and strategies related to communication and improving the quality of personal and professional relationships. She has a Master’s Degree in Education with a concentration in group dynamics and is a skilled mediator. Linda develops a safe, supportive, interactive and fun learning environment in her workshops and individual mentoring sessions. She is based in Sarasota, FL, and can be reached at 941-400-1270 and lw1270@gmail.com.

Spirituality

It wasn’t long before an opportunity came to join an unusual business endeavor, so I quit my job and never looked back. Things weren’t always easy, and finances were unstable, but the whole situation was so rewarding and exciting that none of that mattered. Stark terror was a small price to pay for such freedom and happiness.

Fortunately, the workshops we were teaching gave us tools to deal with fears as they came up, and that meant becoming experts in what we taught. As they say, you teach best what you most need to learn.

Love and fun were a big part of the teaching, so we’d often take a Frisbee break on the office building lawn across the street. We sympathized with the employees who watched from their windows as we played in the sunshine. There, but for a choice, sits me.

Business is a great way to discover new abilities, and if your budget is tight you quickly learn to write copy, design brochures and fliers, provide customer service, and market your product. You also get to take responsibility for whatever happens and make adjustments.

Once you learn to access that Creative Intelligence, you have a world of options. You become master of your life, and you get to make your own choices. You can set your own priorities, pursue your dreams, and enjoy the trip. You can stretch and grow all the way to the bank, and if one thing doesn’t work, you can do it better or differently. Whether life gives you opportunities or challenges, you can approach them with courage, confidence and a creative mind-set.

You are never alone when you exercise your Creative Connection. You are, in fact, tapping into the ONENESS that is everything.