

Communication Skills: Self-Reflection

Habits to Avoid:

1. As I listen, I compare the other person's viewpoint with my own.
2. I tend to say what I think, without worrying about how the other person perceives it. I assume that we'll be able to work it out later.
3. I catch myself asking leading questions to encourage the other person to agree with my viewpoint.
4. I feel uncomfortable with silence during conversations.
5. I interrupt people.
6. I play "devil's advocate" to prompt responses from the other person.
7. I shout and point at people when we have a heated conversation.
8. I start planning my response while the other person is talking.
9. I think that my opinion is the most important in the room.
10. I use email to communicate complex issues with people. It's quick and efficient.
11. I'm surprised to find that people haven't understood what I've said.
12. If I don't understand something, I tend to keep this to myself and figure it out later.
13. If I'm busy, I let others talk to me as long as they're quick.
14. If the other person is struggling to explain something, I jump in with my own suggestions.
15. To be more productive, I respond to emails and text messages while I'm speaking to people on the phone.
16. When I finish writing a report, memo or email, I scan it quickly for typos and so forth, and then send it off right away.
17. When I write a memo, email or other document, I give all of the background information and detail I can to make sure that my message is understood.

Best Practices:

1. Before I communicate, I think about what the person needs to know, and how best to convey it.
2. Before I send a message, I think about the best way to communicate it (in person, over the phone, in a newsletter, via memo and so on).
3. I always tailor my message to suit the person I am talking to.
4. I am confident when I talk to people and I speak clearly without mumbling.
5. I am good at getting my point across in a clear, concise manner without waffling.

6. I am good at making eye contact with people when I am talking to them.
7. I am good at reading the body language of others.
8. I am good at summarizing the key points of conversations that I have with people.
9. I am not intimidated by situations where I must communicate with difficult individuals.
10. I am open minded and am willing to change my viewpoint based on information provided by others.
11. I keep my cool when talking to other people even if I feel angry about what they say.
12. I consider cultural barriers when planning my communications.
13. I feel comfortable conducting meetings.
14. I find it easy to concentrate on what others are saying and I don't lose my focus.
15. I find it easy to listen to what other people have to say without interrupting.
16. I make a conscious effort to match my body language to the message I want to convey.
17. I only speak up if I have something valuable to contribute to the conversation and I avoid talking just for the sake of it.
18. I prepare for all communications and think things through before I speak.
19. I repeat points back during a conversation to clarify my understanding of what the other person is saying.
20. I try to anticipate and predict possible causes of confusion, and I deal with them up front.
21. I try to help people understand the underlying concepts behind the point I am discussing. This reduces misconceptions and increases understanding.
22. I pay attention and try to read the other person's body language as I listen to them speak.
23. When I am talking to people, I pay attention to their body language.
24. I use diagrams and charts to help express my ideas.
25. To get people to elaborate on their point, I ask open questions (ones that can't be answered with "yes" or "no").
26. When group discussions get heated, I am good at keeping everyone calm and on track.
27. When other people in the group are quiet, I encourage them to contribute.
28. When people speak to me about a sensitive subject, I make an effort to put them at ease.
29. When people speak to me, I stay completely still so that I don't distract them.
30. When people talk to me, I try to see their perspectives.
31. When someone is speaking to me, I nod appropriately and say things like "okay" and "uh-huh" occasionally.