

# COMMUNICATION

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Mid-America Conference

Definition: Communication is the process whereby behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, is perceived and responded to.

## I. Guidelines for Communication

1. Actions speak louder than words  
*Avoid contradictions in verbal and nonverbal messages*
2. Define the important and emphasize it  
*Avoid the trivial*
3. Show respect  
*Avoid degrading and condescending words*
4. Be clear and specific  
*Avoid vagueness*
5. Be real, accurate and honest  
*Avoid exaggerations*
6. Be polite and reasonable  
*Avoid rudeness*
7. Every event has different points of view  
*Avoid poor perception*
8. Honor your parents in the Lord  
*Avoid ignoring their observations*
9. Disagreements can be constructive  
*Avoid destructive arguments*
10. Be open about feelings and viewpoints  
*Avoid deception and sullen silence*
11. Be tactful and considerate  
*Avoid taking advantage*
12. Ask questions and listen carefully  
*Avoid preaching or lecturing*
13. Be responsible  
*Avoid making excuses*
14. Value both humor and seriousness  
*Avoid destructive teasing*
15. Try to understand others  
*Avoid judgements*

**DO NOT:** put down, ridicule, interrupt, name-call, blame, bug, criticize, pout, change the subject, nag, yell, whine or lay guilt trips

**DO:** speak the truth in love

## II. Dynamics of Communication

- A. **Polemical** – debate or confront others' opinions
  1. Presentation of truth – carefully reasoning with others (Acts 17:17)
  2. Presentation of proofs – developing and researching and intellectual view of the faith (Acts 9:22)

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- B. **Persuasive** – move others to a belief, position or action
    - 1. Invitation to decision – an appeal to reconciliation (Acts 18:4)
    - 2. Sense of urgency – a warning of coming judgement (2 Cor 5:11)
    - 3. Long obedience – a desire to see change (Acts 19:8)
  - C. **Didactic** – instruction and information
    - 1. Preaching and teaching – to meet the needs (Acts 19:9-10)
    - 2. Questions and answers – form values (Acts 18:11)
  - D. **Versatile** – changing or fluctuating readily
    - 1. Adaptable – not only in word, but in action (Acts 28:1-10)
    - 2. Stern – tough love (Galations 2:11)
    - 3. Open – anyone, anywhere (Acts 16:13)
  - E. **Tone** – style or manner of expression
    - emotional – laughter and tears (Acts 20:31)
- III. Listening Behaviors
- A. Hearing – sound waves received by the ear
  - B. Information gathering – absorption of stated facts
  - C. Cynical listening – defensive or protective to the listener
  - D. Offensive listening – counter-attack the speaker with his/her own words
  - E. Polite listening – minimal social requirement
  - F. Active listening – involving listener with responsibilities
- IV. Variables in Communication
- A. Attitudes – mental or spiritual state that predisposes behavior
  - B. Social Organization – cultural aspects that affect perception
    - 1. Collective society – members of a group i.e. church
    - 2. Role society – members of a profession i.e. student
  - C. Thought Pattern – form of reasoning
    - 1. Western thought – Aristotle
    - 2. Eastern thought – Confucius
    - 3. African thought – tribal
  - D. Roles – expectation of certain positions
  - E. Language Skill – competent use
  - F. Space – different distances, gender and touching
  - G. Time Sense – orientation to timing
    - 1. Spatial – linear – past, present, future
    - 2. Happenings – certain events occur and then pass
- V. Communicating our Faith
- A. Be natural – avoid imposing God on anyone
  - B. Be gentle – avoid rushing or controlling the conversation
  - C. Be real – avoid Christian jargon
  - D. Be interested – ask leading questions
  - E. Be true – point out differences – both strengths and weaknesses
  - F. Be honest – “I don’t know.”