

ELEVEN ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

1. Blaming, Criticizing

WORDS: (a) "Why do you always..." "If you would discipline the children more you wouldn't have this problem." "You're just lazy."

MESSAGE: (b) I don't have much respect for you as a person.

EFFECT: (c) Produces feelings of inferiority or worthlessness. The person becomes defensive, resists or withdraws.

2. Analyzing, Offering Insights

(a) "The reason you feel that way is..." "You're really taking your anger out on me that you feel for him" "What you really mean to say is..." "You feel that way because..."

(b) I really know you better than you know yourself.

(c) Produces feelings of inferiority, confusion, not being understood at all.

3. Avoiding

(a) "I don't really want to talk about it now." "Can't you see I'm busy?" "Tell me later." (and then not mentioning it).

(b) I'm more important than you are. I don't really want to listen or understand.

(c) Produces feelings of rejection.

4. Reasoning

(a) "If you'd just look at the facts..." "actually you're wrong because..." "It's very simple if you look at it logically."

(b) I am smarter than you are. Your feelings are not important. The facts are as I see them.

(c) Makes a win / lose relationship, a power struggle. Produces a feeling that the reasoner always has to be right. Produces defensiveness.

5. Providing Answers

(a) "Have you tried..." "I think the best thing is..." "Why don't you?" "Yes, but..."

(b) You can't manage without my help. I'm smarter than you.

(c) Produces feelings of inferiority and resistance. Can enable a person not to take responsibility for himself.

6. Ordering, Threatening, Warning

(a) "You must..." "If you don't..." "I'm warning you!"

(b) I'm the boss. I'm stronger than you are.

(c) Produces fear, resistance, a feeling of humiliation.

7. Questioning

(a) "Why did you do that?" "Why do you feel that way" "Why do you think you feel this way?"

(b) I don't really trust you. When I get a complete account I'll come up with an answer.

(c) The person can't share their thoughts or feelings because they have to conform to the questioner. The questioner controls the conversation and does not reveal his feelings. Produces a feeling of being prosecuted.

8. Preaching

- (a) "A good wife (or husband) would..." "Children who respect their parents would..." "A Christian would..."
- (b) You don't really measure up to what you should be. You are not a good person.
- (c) Produces guilt, low self-esteem.

9. Praising (marshmellowing)

- (a) "I know I can always count on you." "I don't know what I'd do without you." "You are such a lady." "You are so strong (good, nice, understanding, etc.)"
- (b) If you don't go on meeting my expectations, I may reject you.
- (c) Produces fear that I won't be able to keep up. What will he/she do if I let him/her down. What if he finds out what I'm really like.

10. Sarcasm, Kidding, Put Downs

- (a) "No, dear, you haven't got it right. You just don't understand the situation..."
"I'm just kidding" (following any statement). "Of course I wouldn't expect you to have the energy to get my dinner after your hard day".
- (b) I really want to hurt you, but you can't blame me because I'm only kidding.
- (c) Produces hurt and humiliation. Belittling and degrading. Produces feelings of inferiority. The person resists or withdraws.

11. Minimizing

- (a) "It's really not that bad." "I think you're overreacting." "Don't you think you're making a mountain out of a molehill?" "You're too sensitive."
- (b) You're not really very emotionally stable (I am). I think maybe you're sick.
- (c) The person feels misunderstood, not cared about. He feels unstable.

EXAMPLES OF POOR COMMUNICATION VS. GOOD COMMUNICATION:

- "You never talk to me" vs. "I really need to talk to you"
- "You're always doing something annoying" vs. "When I arrived home and you were on the phone I got upset"
- "You're always busy when I get home" vs. "I really want a big kiss hello because I missed you"
- "Why didn't you call" vs. "I really got worried when you didn't call"
- "How come you didn't remember..." vs. "I feel so insignificant when you forget what I told you"
- "Why are you wearing that dress" vs. "I really like your red dress, this one doesn't do you justice"
- "You really have a problem" vs. "How can I help"

Emotional Word Pictures

Homework:

1. Set aside time each day to talk about your experiences and how you feel about them
2. Set aside an evening and each of you write a ten statement biography. If someone had to know the real you what 10 essential things would they have to know. Reveal the person underneath all the facades and roles, expressing your deepest feeling versus surface appearance.

