

Talking past each other / Interpersonal Communications

This class focuses on the interpersonal issues of people messing up UNINTENTIONALLY. This is **not** for people who are toxic whether by choice or due to mental health. In those cases, ask for help.

A lot of problems that happen within groups come down to poor communications. For example

***Saying the wrong thing and offending a person.**

*And the flipside, not knowing how to respond when something offensive is said.

*Dragging others into a conflict, making the situation worse

*Ignoring offenses when you see them and could intervene

*Getting involved when you shouldn't

Picking up offenses

Definition: When two people are having a problem, but others start picking sides to support and get angry even though nothing was done to them.

Remind people that the issue is between the principle actors.

Encourage members to not take sides when the basic issue is personal chemistry or idiosyncrasies.

Encourage members to try to help each side reconcile.

***How to overlook a matter and really mean it when you say "fine"**

Definition: Too often people will not resolve a matter so when something similar happens in the future they flare up with emotions based in the previous problem.

When resolving a situation, check to make sure that the people have truly settled it. They do not have to necessarily love the solution. But you need to make sure they are at a place where the anger is not festering.

***Fixing the cavity before you need root canal**

Definition: When you see a problem starting deal with it.

This is an easy problem to fall into. We don't like conflict. But if we can make the effort to head off problems when they are small, they can save a lot of pain.

***The fine art of being a two-faced hypocrite.**

Definition: When you are friends with each side in an issue but don't take sides.

This is hard. You will have cases where you are friends with both parties in a conflict. You need to be a friend but not let yourself get sucked into taking sides if each party has some merit in their issue. These are not cases where one person bullied, harassed or attacked another. These are cases where the personalities are clashing and there is no clear right or wrong.

***How to Make an Apology**

Apologize.

Explain what you think you did wrong. Sometimes you must ask, “what have I done?”

Listen to them

Offer to explain why you did it if THEY want.

CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOUR for the future.

Do NOT explain to justify your actions. “I’m sorry but you have to understand that...”.

Doing this says to the other person that you do not feel their response was justified.

That they are truly the one who is wrong.

***Taking Ownership for what you did**

When something is done that hurts or angers another, don’t try to deflect. People can see through this. Instead, acknowledge the other person’s feelings. Even if you didn’t mean to cause hurt, acknowledging that you did helps to resolve and defuse the situation.

The following is advice from a professional development newsletter that I think is good to follow.

Step 1: Learn to Listen

When it comes to communicating, listening is just as important as speaking. Try these pointers:

- Give the other person your complete attention.
- Stay focused. Don’t think about what you’re going to say while the person is talking.
- Don’t interrupt. Let the other person make their point.
- Maintain eye contact and nod your head.

Step 2: Focus on Your Feelings

Before you speak, think about how you feel. Focusing on your feelings makes it easier for the other person to hear without feeling defensive.

- Start with “I” statements that describe your feelings.
- Focus on the situation, rather than the other person’s actions.

Step 3: Stay Calm

Staying calm not only helps you communicate more effectively, but also puts the other person at ease. Try these tips:

- Sit down.
- Take slow, deep breaths.
- Keep your body language relaxed—smile and use smooth movements.
- Use a pleasant tone of voice; do not lecture or whine.
- If you feel yourself getting angry, take a break.

Step 4: State the Facts

Be specific about the issue and speak honestly and clearly.

- Give detailed examples of behaviors you have observed.
- Try to avoid generalizing or judgments.
- Stay focused on the issue.

Step 5: Make a Request

Be clear about what action you want from the other person. Stating your request clearly and concisely makes it more likely the other person will be able—and willing—to fulfill it.

- Make sure to frame it as a request, not a demand.

Try to stay positive and open.