

EXTRA! from the Creek

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the Church at Dyers Creek

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**This week we're passing along to you
a page from the**

Pastoral Counseling Papers

Communication at Its Best

March 19, 2008

Just because you said it doesn't mean that others understood it. Or if they did hear it, it might not be what you meant. Much of communication leads to confusion. Communication is a process of sharing information with another person in such a way that the other person understands what you are saying. Their understanding is based on what is being said, who is saying it, the situation they are in, their own past experience, their self-image, and an array of other possible filters. To effectively communicate, it will certainly help if you would:

Watch your tongue. You can do more harm with an inappropriately stated thought than you might ever imagine. But just as a word improperly said can be destructive, a word fitly spoken can give new delights, make a plain person beautiful, heal bruises, soothe agitated tempers, give hope to despondent souls, and point the way to God.

Avoid half-truths. Remember, that means the other half is a lie.

Distinguish between fact and opinion. Don't state something as reality when it is simply your opinion.

Be careful about absolute statements. For example, "You never talk to me" or "I don't have anything to wear" are not true statements.

Say only those things that are necessary. Speak to build someone up or to meet a need. Unwholesome or degrading words do not edify others or honor our Lord.

Listen. You will never understand another person's perspective unless you listen carefully – and genuinely – to him or her. Some conversations require only that you listen attentively and keep your opinions and advice to yourself.

Put the speaker at ease. Be receptive and don't try to fix the other person. Promise Keepers uses this definition: "A true friend is someone who knows all about me, loves me for who I am, and has no plans for my immediate improvement."

Don't avoid controversy. When a controversy comes up, people usually stuff it or strike out. Both ways are inappropriate. The key is to address differences in truth and love.

Watch your emotions. Positive communication cannot take place if you blow up and hurl your emotions at other people.

Remove distractions. When you are talking with someone, don't doodle or look around or allow other distractions to interfere. Concentrate on the individual.

Empathize with the person. Try to see the subject from his or her perspective.

Be patient. Effective communication doesn't happen quickly or by schedule. Give yourself plenty of time to listen without interruption.

Ask questions. This encourages the person and shows that you are both interested and listening. Ask, "What do you mean by that?" or "How did that make you feel?"

Sources

Ron Jenson. *Taking the Lead* (Multnomah)

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