

The Seven Challenges Workbook

Cooperative Communication Skills for Success at Home and at Work

available free of charge in PDF e-book format at Communication-Skills.net

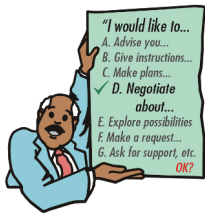
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Challenge ONE

Start by listening more carefully and more responsively - acknowledging the feelings and wants that people express in word and mood. Actively acknowledging another person's experience does not have to mean that you agree or approve. Compassionately allow people to feel whatever they feel. People are much more likely to listen if they have been listened to with actively expressed acknowledgments.



Challenge TWO

Explaining your conversational intent and inviting consent. Use one of 30 basic conversational invitations such as, "Right now I would like to take a few minutes and ask you about... [subject]." The more involvement and effort a conversation is going to require, the more you will benefit by sharing your conversational goal and inviting the conscious cooperation of your intended conversation partner.



Challenge THREE

Expressing yourself more clearly and completely - giving your listeners the information they need to understand (mentally reconstruct) your experiences more fully. One good way is to use "the five I-messages": What/how I (1)observe, (2)am feeling, (3) because I interpret/evaluate/need, and now I (4)want to request, and (5)envision/hope for from request. (Good for self-understanding, also.)

Challenge FOUR



Translating criticisms and complaints into requests and explaining the positive results of having your request granted. Do this for both your own complaints and the complaints that others bring to you. Focusing on the positive outcome shows respect to the recipient of a request as having a positive contribution to make, and shifts focus from past mistakes to present and future successes.



Challenge FIVE

Asking questions more "open-endedly" and more creatively. "How did you like that movie?" is an open-ended question that invites a wide range of answers. "Did you like it?" suggests only "yes" or "no" as answers and does not encourage discussion. Sincerely asked open-ended questions can open up our conversation partners. (How comfortable are you with this suggestion?)



Challenge SIX

Thanking... Explore and express more appreciation, gratitude, encouragement and delight. In a world full of problems and criticisms, make a special effort to look for opportunities to express satisfaction. Whether partnering, parenting or working, it is the memory of many appreciations that makes a relationship strong enough to allow for the stresses of problem-solving and differing needs.



Challenge SEVEN

Adopting the continuous learning perspective... Make the practices described in challenges 1 through 6 important parts of your everyday living. Pay attention to each conversation as an opportunity to grow in skill, awareness and compassion. Work to redefine each of your "opponents" in life as a learning and problem-solving partner. Help along the processes of change in your family and work life by personally embodying the changes, virtues and styles of behavior you want to see in others.