

## Be a Powerful Listener

Powerful listeners ACTIVELY listen, and they paraphrase and summarize naturally. Powerful listeners focus on subtle tones, facial expressions and context, they respond in a manner that demonstrates they were hearing the speakers meaning as well as their words. **They listen to understand, not just to be able to make their argument.**

Phrases that start with "It sounds like" or "I can see that" are examples of paraphrasing. Being able to express the speaker's position clearly, even if you disagree with them, tells him/her that you value him/her enough to listen.

Paraphrasing also gives the speaker a chance to clarify.

You need to show you are listening with your eyes and body as well. Face the speaker, lean forward a bit, nod, vocalize... Do not touch your hair, watch, clothing, glance at the clock, wall, window.

Teach yourself to focus completely on the person speaking.

## Be Data Driven

Data Driven Communicators do two things. They put their own assumptions on the table AND they probe for missing data.

"I assume we are both disappointed in our experience with that leather flogger." (assumption is on the table) Do you have anything to add to help me clarify my assumption? (probe for missing data)

Being data driven means looking for other people's assumptions and issues. "Help me understand, what are you assuming is the problem?"

Data driven communicators look outside themselves for information. They turn to others for information. "Jeff, you made this flogger, can you tell me if I am swinging it correctly?"

Data driven means bringing issues to the table, using concrete examples and specifics to help people get on the same page. It means not getting mired in generalities. "I saw Greg use a flogger like this and it impacted with accuracy. Yet when I went to use it, the falls were going every which way and landing in no hit zones."

Being Data Driven also means staying humble. You ask for other people's point of view. You do not assume you are competent and are willing to hear new information.

## Advanced Communication Skills



## Develop your Communication Skills



**[ASPECC]**

Communication is a fundamental skill, requiring thought, practice and more thought and practice :)

# Basic Communication

## Refresher:

**Body Language:** Listen with your body, check their body language. Body language is estimated to be 55-75% of our communication.

**Tone of Voice:** Tone of voice is also more of our communication than our words. A lower tone can be seen as more authoritative or knowledgeable.

**Volume:** Too quiet is often mistaken for passive. Reducing the volume of your voice can make you seem less aggressive.

**Inflection:** Emphasis on certain words conveys passion, enthusiasm and meaning.

**Words:** Metaphors, short concise sentences, ambiguous wording.. these all impact our communication.

**Empathy:** This is being trustworthy, confidential, non judgmental

**Active Listening:** paraphrasing, summarizing, prompting and challenging.

# Advanced Communication

Speaking for Yourself, Tailoring your Communication Style, Being a Powerful Listener, Being Data Driven are the key components to advanced communication.

## Speaking for Yourself

Express your views directly and state your concerns up front. Speaking for yourself means taking responsibility and ownership of your opinions and values-rather than blaming others or outside forces and using generalizations.

Examples:

"I feel disappointed in our lack of honest communication" rather than "Our relationship sucks" or "You are a horrible communicator"

This reduces defensive responses as it places no blame. You are expressing YOUR concern. Your concern is clearly defined.

Avoid questions over statements. "Are you really being honest?" is an attack, and lacks ownership compared to "I need you to be honest with me right now."

# Tailor your Communication Style

There are four styles of communicating: Directing, Expressing, Thinking and Harmonizing. You can go to [www.leadingresources.com](http://www.leadingresources.com) and take the "Straight Talk" survey to find your style.

Directors want information in quick, bottom line bullet points.

Expressers want a full exploration of options and ideas.

Thinkers want to hear the details behind a proposal.

Harmonizers want to understand the impact of any proposal.

Tailor your communication style to meet your need in the conversation, or to meet someone else s.