

## *Communication strategies*

The contemporary world and the changing practices in recruitment and selection of employees using modern methodologies and tools are demanding scholars to prepare for life beyond high school and universities by combining career programs and applied academic programs. These two programs are extremely effective on their own, but when taken together they provide a powerful learning mix.

Transferring theories into practice is critical to a learning individual. Scholars often lack some fundamental soft skills as they step out of their comfort zone into the challenging real world. Having appreciated the need for building self esteem and assertiveness to boost your self confidence, as a well rounded scholar you also need to be equipped with competencies and skills to develop communication strategies to pursue short and long term personal and professional goals.

It is crucial to understand the impact your communication skills have on other people and how improving these skills can make it easier for you to get along in different walks of life.

Confidence in your ability to express yourself well and keep your composure in difficult situations can be a crucial asset. If you are frequently anxious about making mistakes, or looking foolish, you limit your own strength to succeed. Do you brim with self-confidence or do you fear appearing incompetent in front of friends and seniors?

Have you ever wondered why it seems so difficult to talk with some people and so easy to talk with others? Can you recall an occasion where you met someone for the first time and immediately liked that person? Something about the individual made you feel comfortable.

Enhancing your communication and interpersonal skills will need you to:

- Identify common communication problems that may be holding you back
- Develop skills in asking questions that give you information you need
- Learn what your non-verbal messages are telling others
- Develop skills in listening actively and empathetically to others
- Enhance your ability to handle difficult situations
- Deal with situations assertively

According to research done by psychologist Shirley Winslow of the University of Alberta, we ALL have four fears. These are:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of humiliation or embarrassment
- Fear of losing power
- Fear of rejection

Usually one of these fears is the strongest. This is the one that influences your behavior most often, the one that quite likely shows up when you communicate and so you need to try and overcome it. It is in you to decide whether you would like to use self-defeating words or uplifting words and lend a positive attitude to those around you, as success is a poor teacher and it is realization of failure that enables us to learn.

There is need for today's scholar to develop relationships by effective communication for which there is need to:

- Speak to people: there is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting
- Smile at people: it takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile
- Call people by name: the sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of their own name
- Be friendly and helpful: to make a friend, you have to be a friend
- Be cordial: speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure
- Be genuinely interested in people: you can like almost anybody if you try
- Be generous with praise and cautious with criticism
- Be considerate with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other fellow's and the right side
- Be alert to give service: what counts most in life is what we do for others
- Add to this a good sense of humor, a big dose of patience and a dash of humility and you will be rewarded many-fold

You also need very active listening skills to be a good communicator. One reason listening is so important is that we do so much of it every day. According to research, listening occupies about 80 percent of our waking hours. Studies confirm that good listeners make good managers. Members of the Academy of Certified Administrative Managers selected active listening as the most crucial management skill.

The problem is that listening and hearing is not the same thing. Most of us were fortunate to be born with hearing, but listening is a skill that must be learned, practiced and perfected before it can be used successfully.

- We should listen for names
- Listen with interest
- Try to get rid of assumptions
- Listen for what isn't said

Listening is hard work. When other people are listening to us, they have the same difficulties we do. Always be clear to the what's in it for me?

Good communicators with interpersonal skills find their way easily in unknown and challenging environments. A positive attitude towards continuous learning is what scholars need to have.

Acquiring success should not breed complacency. In fact, becoming more willing and keen to learn will boost self-esteem further.

Growing is a life-long learning experience which requires emotional intelligence, self-motivation, positive thinking and the right attitude. Attitudes are contagious! Is yours worth catching?

**Today's scholars, tomorrow's leaders.....**