

# Communication is not that easy!

*We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.*

— Epictetus, a Greek philosopher

## 1. Discuss the questions.

- What does the quote mean? Do you agree with it?
- When we communicate, what is more important: listening or talking?
- What are the qualities of a good communicator?
- What problems might occur when communicating with someone?

## 2. Complete the table with words that go with these verbs. Some words can be matched to more than one verb.

feedback	thoughts	ideas	confusion	meaning
misunderstanding		miscommunication	message	animosity

receive	share	grasp
message feedback	ideas thoughts feedback	meaning
prevent	interpret	lead to
miscommunication confusion misunderstanding	message feedback thoughts	misunderstanding animosity confusion miscommunication

## 3. Fill in the sentences with the correct form of the verbs from the table above and then discuss these points.

- Asking people questions usually **prevents** miscommunication.
- One of the most common reasons that **leads to** misunderstandings is the use of complicated sentence structures.
- It only makes sense to **share** positive feedback as it keeps everyone happy.
- People with various knowledge, experience and cultural backgrounds **interpret** messages in a different way.

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4. Watch the first part of a [video](#) (to 3:10) titled “How miscommunication happens (and how to avoid it)” and choose correct answers.

1) The transmission model:

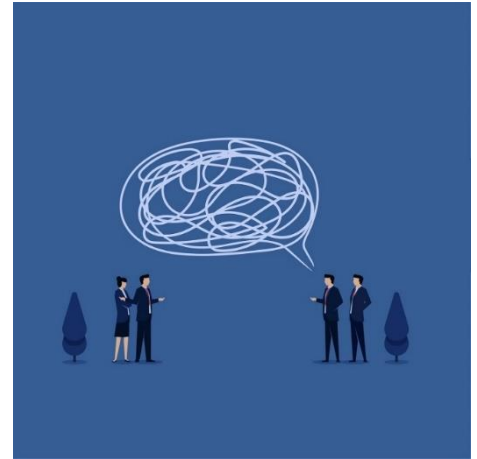
- A. means that communication is a one-way process
- B. involves communicating complex concepts
- C. includes feedback from the other person

2) In the transactional model:

- A. there is no exchange of information
- B. just one person assigns meaning
- C. people give and receive feedback

3) Perceptual filters....

- A. improve communication by adding extra information
- B. limit the number of messages we receive
- C. change meanings and interpretation of messages we receive



5. Complete these rules of good communication with words from the box.

filters

gut

open

express

engage

#1: **Engage** actively with the verbal and nonverbal feedback of others, and adjust your message to facilitate greater understanding.

#2: Listen with your eyes and ears, as well as with your **gut**. Remember that communication is more than just words.

#3: In the rush to **express** ourselves, it's easy to forget that communication is a two-way street. Be **open** to what the other person might say.

#4: Be aware of your personal perceptual **filters**. Elements of your experience, including your culture, community, and family, influence how you see the world.

6. Watch the second part of the [video](#) (from 3:10) and check your answers in the previous exercise.

7. Discuss the rules above. What do they mean? How easy do you think it is to follow these rules?

**8. Discuss the questions.**

- Do you think that people tend to use too many words to communicate their ideas?
- What can we do to be better communicators?
- In what kinds of situations do you have to ask someone to rephrase what they've said?

**9. Match phrases to correct categories.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • In other words, ...                         | • To be more specific....                            |
| • I don't quite follow....                    | • Can you say that again?                            |
| • Can you elaborate on that?                  | • I don't get it...                                  |
| • I don't fully understand...                 | • Would you mind speaking more slowly?               |
| • Could you be more specific?                 | • So, you're saying that...                          |
| • I didn't catch that.                        | • If I understand you correctly...                   |
| • Could you repeat?                           | • Correct me if I'm wrong, but you're saying that... |
| • To put it another way...                    | • Let me clarify that...                             |
| • Just to be clear, you're suggesting that... |  |

You want someone to clarify what they've said	You didn't hear something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't quite follow....</li> <li>• I don't fully understand...</li> <li>• I don't get it...</li> <li>• Can you elaborate on that?</li> <li>• Could you be more specific?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't catch that.</li> <li>• Could you repeat?</li> <li>• Can you say that again?</li> <li>• Would you mind speaking more slowly?</li> </ul>
You want to explain/clarify something you've already said	You want to check if you understand what someone has just said
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In other words, ...</li> <li>• To put it another way...</li> <li>• To be more specific....</li> <li>• Let me clarify that...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just to be clear, you're suggesting that...</li> <li>• So, you're saying that...</li> <li>• If I understand you correctly...</li> <li>• Correct me if I'm wrong, but you're saying that...</li> </ul>

**10. What would you say in these situations? Use the expressions from the table on the previous page to complete these dialogues. [sample answers]**

a) A: First, you need to know the nuts and bolts of running a business.

B: **I don't fully understand what you mean.**

A: It means that you need to know at least basic details about running a business.

b) A: I'm going to finish this task soon.

B: **Could you be more specific?** Everyone's waiting for you.

A: Yeah, I'll finish by Friday.

c) A: If you want to add a new vendor to the system, you have to click this button and type the vendor's details.

B: That's it? I'm not sure if I know what to do. **Can you elaborate on that?**

A: Ok, so you click this button and type your vendor's details. Remember that all fields should be filled in. Then, you click 'accept' in the top right corner. After a second, you'll see the information on your screen whether your form has been completed correctly or not. If not, you need to repeat the process.

d) A: So, I asked her if she knows... and how about... But she...

B: I'm sorry, but I've just switched off. **Can you say that again?**

e) A: He wasn't really honest with us.

B: **Just to be clear, you're suggesting that he was a liar.**

A: Yes, he was a liar.

f) A: Your name, please.

B: Jane Kowalski. K – O – W – A – L – S – K – I.

A: Sorry, **I didn't catch that.** Would you mind speaking more slowly?

g) A: You should present the product, talk about all its advantages, give them the price and make sure they buy it.

B: If I understand you correctly, I just need to sell it.

A: Yeah, **in other words,** just sell it.