



# Skillful Communication

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An illustration of an office scene where a conversation is going poorly. In the center, a man in a suit with his arms outstretched looks confused. To his left, a man in a green shirt looks frustrated with three red exclamation marks above his head. To his right, a woman in a yellow vest looks confused with three red question marks above her head. In the background, a man sits at a desk on the left, looking at a laptop with a red question mark above him. On the right, another man sits at a desk, looking stressed with a hand on his head and a bar chart above him. A paper airplane flies from the left desk towards the woman. A large clock on the wall shows the time as approximately 10:10. Papers are scattered on the floor. The overall tone is one of workplace frustration and miscommunication.

How can you tell a  
conversation is going south?



We want meaningful, kind, caring relationships and friendships. Unfortunately, we have this tendency to behave in ways that get us more and more of what we DON'T want.

**What  
doesn't  
work?**



# Self monitoring is key



- If you can see when you are becoming upset, unskillful, or holding back, then you can intervene for yourself in order to get back on track. The sooner you catch it, the better.
- What will you notice?
  - Physical signals- stomach tightens, body becomes tense, shallow breathing
  - Emotional signals- Feeling scared, hurt, angry, wanting to suppress feelings
  - Behavioral signals- raising your voice, pointing your finger, getting very close to a person's face, becoming quiet

# If escalated, your motives can change without any conscious thought

- Trying to win
- Saving face
- Seeking revenge

What was my intention for this conversation? What was my purpose?



A young man and woman are sitting on a couch in a modern, brightly lit room. The man, in the foreground, is wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and has his arms crossed, looking off to the side with a serious expression. The woman, in the background, is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and has her arms crossed, looking down. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

# Ownership

**There is an  
intermediate step  
between what others  
do and how we  
feel....**

**We tell  
ourselves a  
story**

- We add meaning to action
- We confuse stories with facts  
because they FEEL like facts



# What kind of stories?



- Victim stories- not my fault
- Villain stories- it's all YOUR fault
- Helpless stories- There's nothing I can do

These excuse us from responsibility, makes it so that we can justify ourselves, and take no ownership over our own choices. It gets us off the hook.

Notice when you're telling yourself a story.... And change it.

**“Why would a reasonable,  
rational, and descent person  
say this?”**

# Skillful Speech

- Being committed to speaking in a skillful way
- No violation of respect for the other person
- Confidence
- Humility
- Honesty
- Frank

Facts are the least controversial.

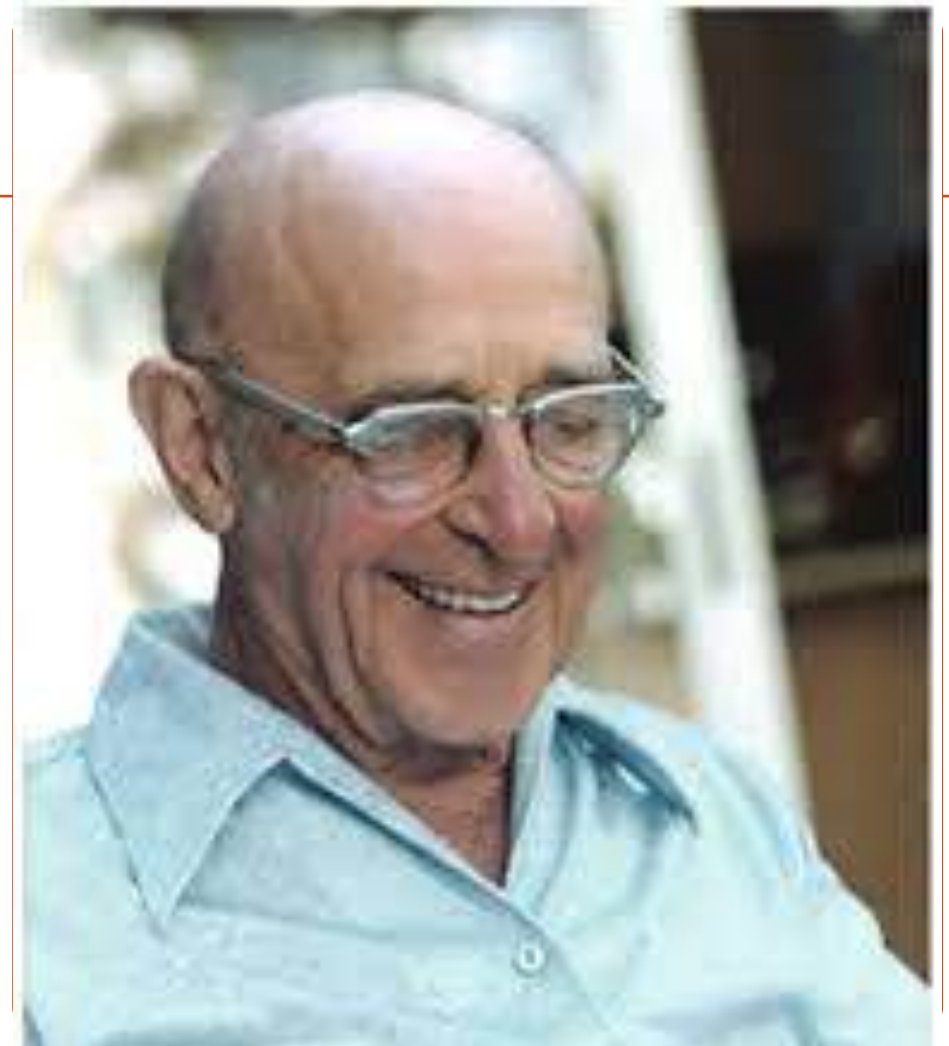
You can “out” yourself on your story.

# Carl Rogers- Person Centered Therapy

## The Three Conditions

- Unconditional positive regard
- Genuineness/ congruence
- Empathy

"Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided."



**Video**

# Reflective listening

- **Reflective listening** is a communication strategy involving two key steps: seeking to understand a speaker's idea, then offering the idea back to the speaker, to confirm the idea has been understood correctly.

You can guess at the underlying feeling!

You can ask if you got it right or not.  
Trust that they will let you know!



**Now you try!**

# And then SHARE



- What do you really want here? Stay true to your initial motive or purpose.
- Remember you can always intervene for yourself or the other person if it's starting to go off the rails.
  - Ask for a break with a set time before coming back to the conversation or go back to the underlying intention for the conversation.
  - You can always slow down, or apologize.
- Let go of the outcome.

# “I-statements”

A stylized illustration of two people sitting at a table. On the left, a woman with reddish-brown hair is shown in profile, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. On the right, a man with a shaved head and glasses is shown in profile, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. They are both looking towards the center of the table. Above them is a large, light gray speech bubble with three dark blue dots inside, indicating a conversation. The background is a solid dark gray.

When you want to say something but don't know what will help, 'I' statement formula is a good step in the right direction. An "I" statement says how it is on my side, how I see it.

- Because you don't know beforehand whether the other person will do what you want or not, the 'cleanest "I" statements are delivered not to force them to fix things, but to state what you need.

# What you can realistically expect is that an appropriate "I" statement made with good intent

- Is highly unlikely to do any harm
- Is a step in the right direction
- Is sure to change the current situation in some way
- Can/will open up to possibilities you may not yet see





## When to use

- When we need to confront others about their behavior
- When we feel others are not treating us right
- When we feel defensive or angry
- When others are angry with us

# USE "I" AND NOT "YOU"

Example leader sentences:

- When I'm....
- When I....
- I think that I....
- I feel that I....
- My concern is....



# REFER TO THE BEHAVIOR, NOT TO THE PERSON



Example leader sentences:

- When I'm shouted at I....
- When I'm sworn at I....
- When I'm pushed around I....
- When the towels are left on the floor I....
- When I think I'm not being heard I....
- When the toys are left on the floor I....

# STATE HOW THE BEHAVIOUR AFFECTS YOU

Example leader sentences:

- I feel unappreciated when....
- I'm worried that something will go wrong if....
- My concern is that....
- I get really anxious when....
- I get really scared when....
- I feel hurt when....
- I feel tired when....





# STATE WHAT YOU NEED TO HAPPEN

Example leader sentences:

- I need to....
- I would like....
- What I'd like to see happen is....
- It would be nice if....

# Example

STEP 1 LISTEN & REPEAT So you're saying that I interrupt all the time?

STEP 2 USE "I" NOT "YOU" OK ... and when I'm ...

STEP 3 BEHAVIOUR shouted at ... I feel....

STEP 4 AFFECT OF THE BEHAVIOUR I need to feel as if I've been understood so please don't shout at me and I will try not to interrupt.

**Questions or comments?**