

# How to Stay COOL When Things Heat UP!



*“The greatest problem with communication is the assumption that it has taken place.”*  
—George Bernard Shaw

## Common deviations from our intent:

- Defending ourselves
- Saving face
- Seeking revenge
- Avoiding embarrassment
- Wanting to win...

From *Crucial Conversations*

## What about you?

What do you do when you deviate from your intent—react to the other person or get caught up in the content?



## Essential communication skills

### 1 Intent

Purpose—what you want to have happen

### 2 Criteria, Expectations or Needs

Relevant factors to be taken into consideration

### 3 Content

Subject—what you end up talking about

### 4 Process

How we look \_\_\_\_\_ %

How we sound \_\_\_\_\_ %

Words we choose \_\_\_\_\_ %



## IF our message is incongruent!

.....

.....

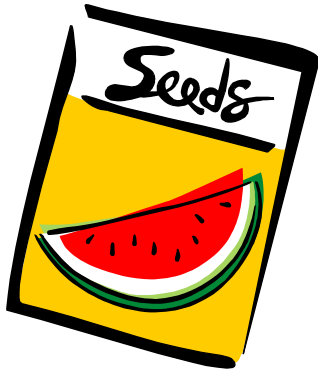
.....

.....

.....

.....

# Focus on a specific situation



Describe the **SITUATION**—focus on the facts

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Practice:** Think of a recent exchange you had with someone when things heated up. Focus on a situation where you weren't pleased with the outcome or how you dealt with the situation. **This is for your eyes only!**

How did you **EXPLAIN** this situation to yourself? What meaning did you give this event? How did you interpret it?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**S**ituation

What **EMOTIONS** came up? How did you feel?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**E**xplanation

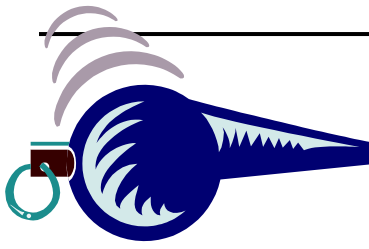
**E**motion

**D**o

What did you **DO**? Focus on specific, observable behavior.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*“Communication works for those who work at it.”  
—John Powell*



# Pieces of the process

## The sound of your voice

Tape yourself... yes, that's how you sound! Check your:

**Tone**

**Volume**

**Pace**

**Pitch**

*“What you are thunders so,  
I cannot hear what you say.”  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Body language and facial expressions

■ A \_\_\_\_\_ is the most important expression for communicating.

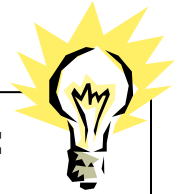
\* Be sure not to smile when you're delivering bad news!

■ If we avoid \_\_\_\_\_ with people, they may perceive us as dishonest, uninterested or cold.

\* Be sure to keep cultural differences in mind!

## Avoid gestures that are

- ▶ Aggressive
- ▶ Extraneous
- ▶ Or communicate resistance



### Listen to your voice:

1. ....
  2. ....
    - a. ....
    - b. ....
  3. ....
- .....
- .....



Think about the situation you just described. How might the way you looked and the way you sounded have helped escalate the situation?

Looked. ....

.....

.....

Sounded. ....

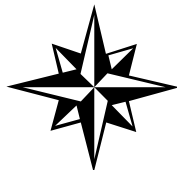
.....

.....

# Reduce the differences...improve communication



*“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”*  
—Stephen R. Covey



**What about you? Do others perceive you as someone who listens? Or, do you appear distracted, uninterested or eager to end the conversation?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Clarifying

Asking **open-ended questions**—*who, when, where, what, how*—to gain a better understanding of the other person’s position and move them toward a solution. Be careful with “*why*” questions—they can be perceived as accusatory, putting the other person on the defensive!

.....  
.....

## Pacing

To **subtly mirror** the communication style of the other person—their posture, facial expressions, gestures and the pace, volume and energy of their voice. *Special note: You do not ape or mimic them!*

.....  
.....

## Backtracking

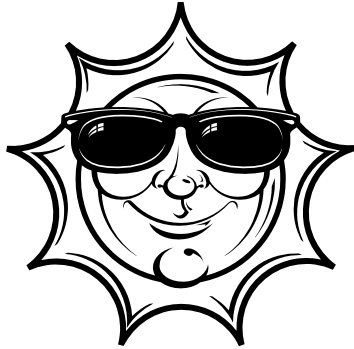
Similar to paraphrasing only you concentrate on using some of their **actual words**. These are called **essence words**—when you use their essence words, they feel heard. **Single out** by repeating a word they use and following that with an open-ended question—especially if you’ve received a single-word answer to a previous question.

.....  
.....

**Practice:** In groups of three, **Person A**, ask **Person B**, “**What do you consider your greatest challenge when things heat up?**” **Person B** tell them whatever you think is important for them to know about you. **Person A**, your job is to **listen actively**—employing attentive body language and facial expressions while practicing pacing, backtracking and clarifying. **Person C**, you are the observer. **Please note specifically** how **Person A** uses pacing, backtracking and clarifying and how their body language and facial expressions let **Person B** know they were listening. You don’t talk—just listen!

You will have **four minutes**. At the end of that time, **Person C** will share specific examples of what they observed.

# Keep Your COOL!



*“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”  
—Albert Einstein*



## Exercise Verbal Aikido

A form of martial arts, the goal of Aikido is to unify mind, body and spirit to effectively neutralize an attack while maintaining the safety of the attacker and defender. When attacked—**accept, redirect and affirm**. In other words, **when pushed, pull; when pulled, push**.

### ▶ Selective Agreement

- Look for something you **can** agree with in what the person is saying
- “*You may be right, \_\_\_\_\_*”

### ▶ Limited Response

- Respond only to the **subject** of the remark, not the **emotion** behind it
- This is an excellent technique for responding to sarcasm!

### ▶ Intentional Innocence

This technique can be very difficult if we want to WIN or BE RIGHT! It’s about acting innocent and letting what the other person said blow right over our head.

## Stress the benefits to them

### ▶ Condition/benefit

“*We / I will / can* .....  
*if / when you will / do* .....



Think about the situation you described. Could you have applied any of these techniques?

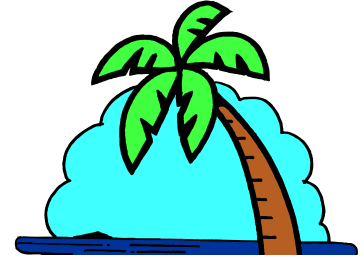
.....

.....

.....

.....

# Take care of yourself



*“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”*

—Eleanor Roosevelt

*“No matter what you do or say to me, I’m still a worthwhile person.”*

—Jack Canfield

*“You grow up the day you have your first real laugh at yourself.”*

—Ethel Barrymore



## Check out these blog posts for details:

- **Visualizations**  
<http://j.mp/NlvA7e>
- **Sensory recall**  
<http://j.mp/PcRLJr>

## ■ Psychological

- **Visualizations**

- **Symbols**

.....

.....

.....

.....

- **Intercepts**

- **Reaffirm your intent**

.....

.....

## ■ Physical...remember to breathe!

- Sit quietly—with both feet on the floor if in a chair, perhaps legs crossed if on the floor
- Relax hands—hold nothing—resting them on knees or in lap
- Close your eyes
- Initially, for practice, place your palm flat on the front of your waist between the bottom of your ribcage and your abdomen.
- Breathe in through your nose with your mouth closed
- Feel your rib cage expand as your shoulders remain still (that’s your diaphragm expanding)
- Exhale slooooooowly through your slightly open mouth—pulling your diaphragm toward your spine.
- Now try inhaling to a count of 3. Hold for 1 count. Exhale to a count of 3. Hold for 1 count.
- Breathe rhythmically

## ■ And laughing...

- Exercise for your internal organs!

**Jan M. McLaughlin, CSP**



Jan@YourCommunicationConnection.com

**206.818.6689**

*“You cannot teach a person anything. You can only help them discover it in themselves.”*

—Galileo

*“Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.”*

—Michael McGriffey, MD

**Preview Jan at**

<http://bit.ly/IIHetE>



# Your action plan

Look back at your situation on page 2 and ask yourself:

**What was my intent? What did I want to have happen?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**What might I have done to help create that difficult situation?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**What could I have said or done to turn around the exchange?**

.....  
.....  
.....

# Suggested reading

Fleming, Dr. Carol. *The Sound of Your Voice*. (CD series available at many libraries or [www.speechtraining.com](http://www.speechtraining.com))

Goldsmith, Marshall. *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

Goleman, Daniel. *“What Makes a Leader?”* available at [hbr.org](http://hbr.org)

Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler. *Crucial Conversations*.

Pease, Barbara and Allan, *The Definitive Book of Body Language*.

Seligman, Martin E.P., Ph.D. *Learned Optimism*.

Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand Talking from 9 to 5*.

◀ Check out Jan's blog posts, tweets & articles for ongoing support