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BOOK REVIEW

Title: Communication Skills

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The book explains the right way of communication skills for success in business (a large corporation, a small company, or even a home – based business) or in the home, with friends, in relationships or anywhere else. It also discusses the art of public speaking and how you can make better presentations, for example by keeping the message clear and simple, being prepared, being vibrant and natural when delivering the message.

The author methodologically explains the communication process including the message, the channel through which the message is conveyed, the receiver, feedback, the context of communication and the barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome them. The author highlights the fact that in verbal communication, an active dialogue is engaged with the use of words. However, at the same time non-verbal communication takes place relying on non-verbal cues, such as gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, even clothing and personal space and how they influence interpretation of messages, including how the message is delivered.

The author of this book has organized the chapters under the sections of Basic Skills, Advanced Skills, Conflict Skills, Social Skills, Family Skills and Public Skills. The first section covers

three chapters that everybody needs to know how to listen, how to disclose thoughts and feelings and how to express what's really true.

The section on Advanced Skills contains six chapters that teach about using and understanding body language: decoding paralanguage and meta messages, uncovering hidden agendas, applying transactional analysis to our communications, clarifying our own and others' language, bridging cultural and gender gaps.

The next section on Conflict Skills contains three chapters covering skills which are essential in conflict situations: assertiveness, fair fighting and negotiating. In these three chapters the author suggests assertive style of communication, fight – for – change technique with some more recent cognitive –behavioral methods of anger management and skills of negotiation which will help an individual to adjust properly in the workplace.

The Social Skills section that follows contains two chapters on avoiding the pitfalls of prejudgment and making contact. In the first author tries to provide an instant evaluation of categorizing strangers and how it helps an individual to encounter an individual which is the very first step of developing people skills. In the second author start with the icebreaking techniques of making contact with the strangers both by active listening and self – disclosure.

The section on Family Skills teaches us how to communicate with our sexual partner, our children and with our whole family. In the chapter Sexual Communication the author discusses about the sexual vocabulary and also cites instances of effective sexual communication which will help couples to overcome their sexual problems. In the chapter communicating with Children the author very intricately tries to solve the problems of the children by providing some necessary guidelines as well as some activities for effective parenting. In Family Communications author suggests some healthy rules for effective family communication and also tends to identify the incongruent messages that distort family communication.

The final section offers four chapters about skills required for influencing others, for effective communication in small groups, when an individual is called upon to make a speech and during interviews. In 'Influencing Others' the author explains the effective strategies for influencing others and also attempts to give a detail plan for influencing change which can serve as a yardstick for professionals as well as to imbibe the qualities of an effective communicator. In ' Small Groups' the author tries to bring forth the communication strategies in a small group designed to accomplish a specific task as it will be of immense help for an individual to fit into the group and influence the group members by choosing an appropriate leadership style. In 'Public Speaking' the author tries to give a detail outline of a persuasive speech along with an example and some effective tips of how to cope up stage fright which will help a student to develop the art of public speaking. In 'Interviewing' the author tries to explicate the role of the interviewer and interviewee with varied checklists and also about the ways of tackling traditional interview questions which will prove to be of immense help for a communication skill trainer to conduct interviews.

Critique: In almost all the sections the author tried to deal with the major aspects of communication in a detailed manner. But as a reader I enjoyed reading the chapter 'Self – disclosure' where the author suggested a rating scale which would help the trainer to teach the students how to disclose themselves to significant people in their life as "self –disclosure makes relationships exciting and builds intimacy." Another most interesting feature is the chapter on ' Transaction Analysis' a psychological interpretation of one's communication style and some exercises were designed by the author to identify the ego states of an individual . In the chapter 'Negotiating' the author should have included some case studies which would enable the students effectively. In the section 'Social

Skills' the author should have included a social skill training worksheet to develop the people skills of the student. The most striking section amongst all was the Family section, which I rarely found in other books on Communication Skill. This section exemplified that communication is not only important in professional sphere but also in the personal front. In the last chapter 'Interviewing' a resume writing section should have been included because a good and an impressive resume will help an individual to project his/her talents in an interview.

As a reader and as a Communication skill instructor I feel that the book is equally beneficial for the business professionals, post graduate students of Communicative English and also for those who want to become an effective communicator both in the personal and professional spheres.
