



Listening Skills (Key Ingredients) that Build Effective Interpersonal Relationships and Communication

Balance Inquiry and Advocacy

Advocacy	Inquiry
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• makes own thought processes known• sharing "Here's where I am . . ." "Where do you see me?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• makes others' thought processes known• exploring "Where are you?" "Here's where I see you ..."

Advocacy

Skills that focus on the ability to inform and persuade others.

An advocate:

- Makes own thought processes visible
- Tells others of his/her wants and needs or desires
- Persuades people to accept ideas
- Initiates discussions
- Expresses opinions
- Gives feedback
- Promotes openness about thoughts and feelings
- Provides information that may differ from the receiver

Think of situations in which you have engaged in advocacy at work:

- in the last week?
- to achieve an important goal?
- when you were uncomfortable?
- successfully or unsuccessfully?



Inquiry

Skills that focus on making others' thought processes known.

An inquirer:

- Gains information from others---about self, about them
- Promotes individuals thinking together
- Begins with appreciation of the other's thinking versus criticism
- Works to understand the needs of others
- Moves toward joint problem solving
- Clarifies messages
- Demonstrates active listening
- Invites others to share their thoughts, ideas, and/or feelings
- Helps others stay open to and work through feedback

“Where are you?”

(Explore your thoughts so I can understand you)

“Where do you see me?”

(Explore where you see me)

Think of a time in which you have engaged in inquiry at work:

- in the last week?
- to achieve an important goal?
- when you were uncomfortable?
- successfully or unsuccessfully?



Inquiry Summary

1. Focus on the person's thoughts and ideas. Focus on understanding the other person's point of view rather than on judging or evaluating their message.
2. Remember to focus on listening and receiving information rather than telling and sharing your own ideas.
3. Ask open-ended questions, clarify, dig, paraphrase or reflect as appropriate.
4. Listen carefully to what was expressed verbally and nonverbally.
5. Repeat the factual content when paraphrasing. Repeat the emotional feelings when reflecting.
6. Check for understanding after paraphrasing and reflecting. Remember no two people often observe and describe the same situation the same way.
7. Develop a desire for feedback mindset as a way of gaining insights in how to enhance communication skills and improve performance.

Advocacy Summary

1. Carefully define your goal; assess readiness and assumptions.
2. Remember, just because you don't like what another person is doing doesn't make it wrong.
3. Explain, assert, command, pitch, or give "I" Message as appropriate.
4. Listen to reactions, reasons, explanations, and even a few excuses. Seek first to understand, then to be understood (Covey). Give the person time to feel heard.
5. Restate the message you are trying to send.
6. Expect defensiveness unless the feedback is positive. Move through the defensiveness continuum.
7. Remember, there are no guarantees for change. You are simply taking your best shot; giving the other person the opportunity to come through on your behalf.



How to Create and Send “I” Messages Special Advocacy Method

What is an “I” Message?

- A statement that communicates your feelings to another person assertively
- A statement that indicates that you are responsible for the statement you make
- A statement that expresses the feelings you have and the reason you feel the way you do

It is best to use an “I” Message when:

- The relationship is important
- You want a way to communicate with lowered defensiveness
- You need to request a change in behavior
- You want to open dialogue for discussion and clarification
- You want a direct, honest way to express yourself
- Other common advocacy methods haven’t worked

“I” Message Formula

Step One:

When you _____

Non-blameful description of the behavior. Be objective.

Step Two:

I get or feel _____

Your honest feeling or emotion. Be specific.

Step Three:

Because _____

The concrete/tangible effects on you, work group, or the business.

Option: Step Four

Therefore, _____

The specific consequences, actions or impact if the behavior doesn’t change.