

Positive Communication Behaviors Or Styles

- Affirming the feelings and needs of others
- Compromising, negotiating, helping others succeed
- Confronting others constructively on difficult issues
- Delaying automatic reactions, not flying off the handle easily
- Expressing genuine interest in the other person
- Expressing respect for values and opinions of others
- Giving one's word sparingly and keeping it
- Giving others a chance to express views or share information
- Giving positive nonverbal messages of acceptance and respect for others
- Giving suggestions constructively
- Joking constructively and in good humor
- Keeping the confidences of others
- Leveling with others, sharing information and opinions openly and honestly
- Listening attentively, hearing the other person out
- Praising and complimenting others sincerely
- Questioning others openly and honestly, asking straight-forward, non-loaded questions
- Sharing one's self with others, smiling, greeting others
- Stating agreement with others when possible
- Stating one's needs and desires honestly
- Staying on the conversational topic until others have been heard
- Talking positively and constructively
- Treating others as equals whenever possible

An honest appraisal of the preceding behaviors reveals the obvious—we all would prefer to be on the receiving end of the positive styles of communication. No one enjoys being ridiculed, put down or ignored. Thus the reaffirming, attentive listener and the uplifting, honest communicator will both reap and sow good, constructive communication experiences.

A Poetic Example

A poem by Shel Silverstein, recorded in the book, *A Light in the Attic*, summarizes what communication is all about.

If we meet and I say, Hi, that's a salutation.
If you ask me how I feel, that's consideration.
If we stop and talk awhile, that's a conversation.
If we understand each other, that's communication.
If we argue, scream and fight, that's an altercation.
If later we apologize, that's reconciliation.
If we help each other home, that's cooperation.
And all these actions added up make civilization.ⁱ

What a great example of communication!

ⁱ Shel Silverstein, *A Light in the Attic*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1981).