



Communication Blockers

Most of us have *learned* to talk about problems in ways that not only fail to resolve them, but end up pushing people away. Here are some common ways we frustrate ourselves and others.

Relationship gaps are created when these immature and sometimes subconscious tactics are in play.

Interrupting

Continually interrupting pressures others to move on quickly or, worse.. remain silent. Either way, it prevents others from exploring their thoughts, feelings, and possible solutions. Far from being a sign of strength, interrupting is often a defense mechanism used to control the conversation, other times it is an attempt to keep from being upset by conflicting ideas.

Blaming

Finding someone or something to blame actually avoids personal responsibility for the problem by dumping it elsewhere. This is often confused with resolving the issue. However, many relationship issues are just too big for one person to handle.

Justifying

The opposite of blaming, justifying is just as destructive. It stops effective communication by shifting the issue to a game of blame and it adds defense. It is a deterrent to actually communicating about the issue.

Trying to establish “The Truth”

Arguing over details can get a discussion so wrapped up that no one ever has to actually do anything about the problem. Available time and energy is spent picking over details, so no time is left to complete the communication effectively.

Sidetracking

Constantly changing topics keeps the subject matter off balance. People don't have to explore or respond to uncomfortable issues when they are sidetracking.

Dealing with too many problems

Some people are like dump trucks - once they start to unload. This can bury hope for change under a huge pile of other problems. It can sometimes communicate to others that you think they are not smart enough to help you. After a while others might stop trying to help.

Attacking communication and Indirect Communication

Continually analyzing someone else's communication flaws simply distracts from working on the real problem. Telling someone how or when they should have said something can be controlling and demeaning. It can communicate you are a judge and they are inferior to your own more skillful communication abilities.

Indirect communication, through subtle hints, non-verbal cues like eye-rolling or sighing, vague language, and passive-aggressive remarks, can be significant communication blockers. These indirect approaches contribute to confusion and misunderstandings. Fostering direct and transparent dialogue is crucial for improved communication dynamics.

Guilt

Guilt can communicate that you aren't interested in the thoughts and feelings of other people. Instead there is an attempt to settle complex problems by invoking 'shoulds', 'oughts', and simple platitudes can demonstrate you aren't willing to consider a real solution to a real problem.

Should statements invite debate. They are often an opinion that often requires a judgment and/or a power dynamic that you know what is best or right.

Ultimatums and power moves

Telling another person to 'take it or leave it' quite literally stops the communication. It limits alternatives and can escalate the problem quickly! One resounding ultimatum can undo *hours* of hard work and good problem-solving.

Using 'always' and 'never'

Telling someone "You always..." or "You never..." can sometimes communicate, "I'll never change my opinion." These words activate defense. Far from resolving an issue, it blocks communication by refusing to recognize others' capacity for change and can sometimes lead others to give up trying.

Name calling & labeling

This is an immature practice and great way to have an argument without having to think. This is a dangerous distraction that is used to avoid communicating. It can lead to a knee-jerk response and counter-attack that produces only bitter feelings, not solutions. The Next Step. Is. Physical. Violence.

Mind reading

Instead of responding when someone is saying what they think, mindreaders make up what others think and opt to tell them. Nobody truly knows what someone else is thinking and this activity stops communication.