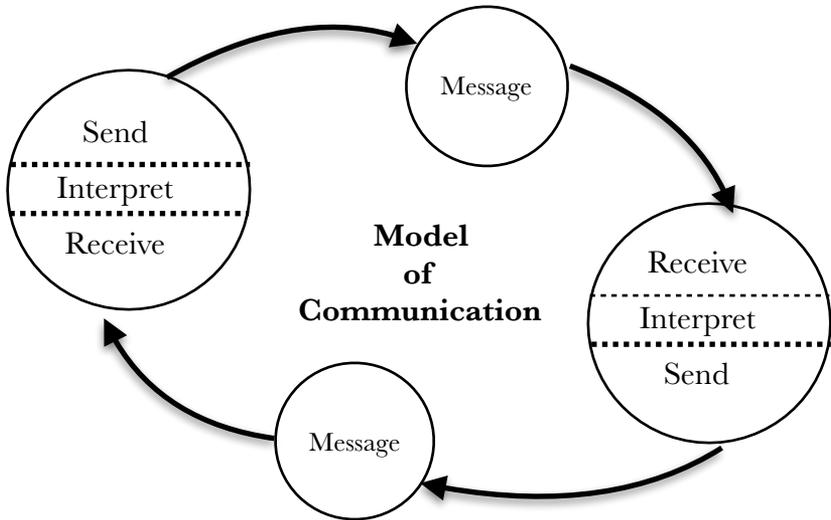


# Communication

**is determined by the receiver.  
Only the person receiving the  
message can decide  
if it is understood.**



## **What is the goal of communication?**

Is it just to exchange information?

or

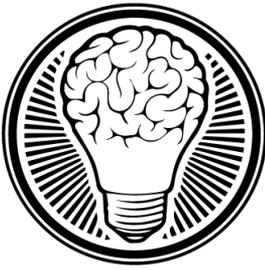
Is it to reach a mutual understanding between two people?

## **Active listening is a critical part of communication.**

- Listen to obtain information
- Listen to understand
- Listen for enjoyment
- Listen to learn

Being an active listener will improve your productivity and increase your ability to influence others.

Good communication skills require a high level of self-awareness and awareness of your audience.



## We Have to Talk

Have you ever found yourself avoiding a conversation that you know you really need to have but just don't want to deal with or don't know how to get started?

**Difficult conversations** are best dealt with face-to-face. Twitter, email or Facebook cannot really communicate what needs to be said and understood.

Think of a difficult conversation you've been putting off. Got it? Following are some key questions to ask yourself before going into the conversation (adapted from Judy Ringer):

1. What is my purpose for having the conversation? What do I hope to accomplish?
2. What would be an ideal outcome?
3. Are there any hidden purposes? Maybe I think I am aiming for a certain purpose but underneath maybe I have another purpose I don't realize or want to disguise? Be aware of your true purpose.
4. What assumptions am I making about the other person's intentions? Be careful about assumptions, they may or may not be accurate.
5. What "buttons" of mine are being pushed or that I need to be aware of?
6. How is my attitude toward the conversation influencing my perception of it? If you think it is going to be horribly difficult, it probably will be. If you believe some good will come from it, that will probably be what happens.
7. Is the other person aware of the problem?
8. Are there common concerns that the other person and I share?
9. Have I contributed to the problem? Has the other person?
10. How will we both know what we have agreed upon at the close of the conversation?

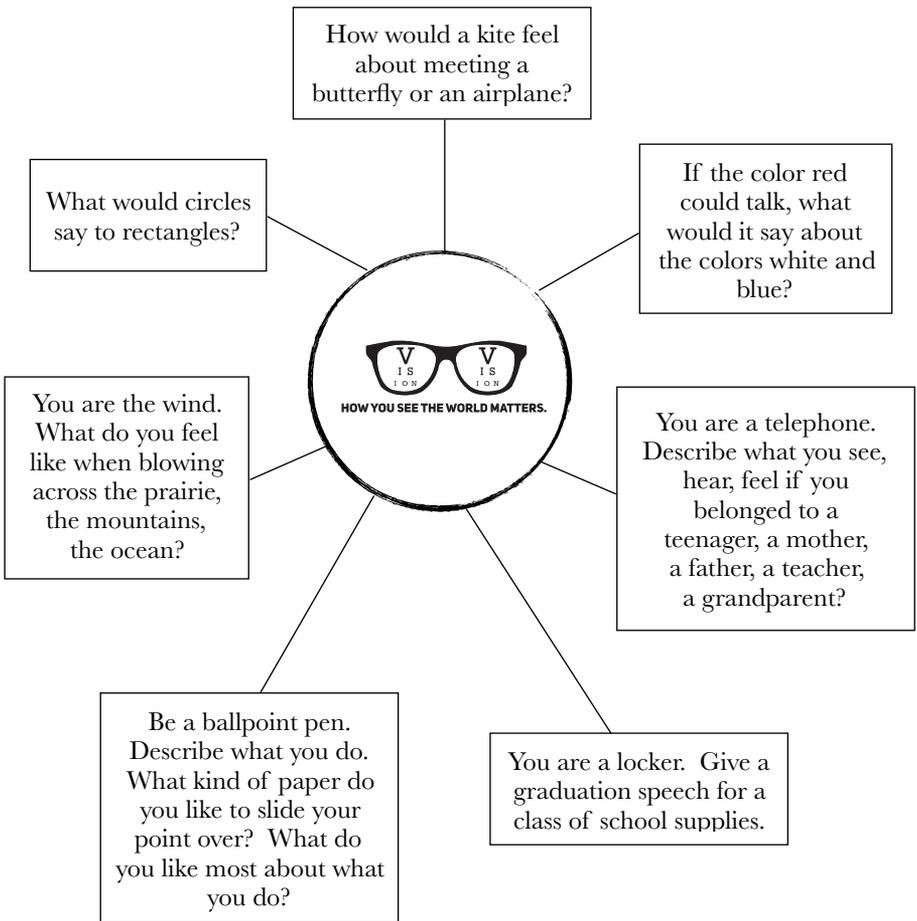
How will I get there?

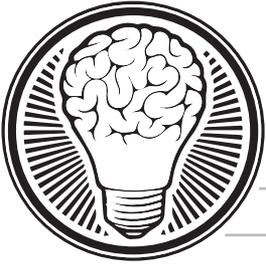


## POINT OF VIEW MATTERS

To be able to understand someone else's perspective, to be able to speak for someone or something else, to see things from a different point of view will improve your communication skills.

*Personification* is giving a thing, an animal, an idea human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed to have feelings or to act like a human. Play with these personification questions to help you develop point of view.





A large area of lined paper for writing, featuring a vertical margin line on the left and four small grey dots placed at regular intervals along it.

**If you think it, write it.**



## Must Have Communication Skills

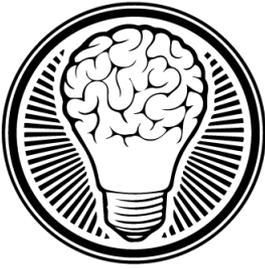
Three skills you need to master:

- Effective questioning
- Confirmatory paraphrasing
- Summarizing

**Effective questions** are open ended. They allow the person you are speaking with to put forth their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas. They can help you understand their point of view. Open ended questions require the other person to give you more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Plan what questions you might ask when preparing for a crucial conversation. Practice asking effective questions.

**Confirmatory paraphrasing** is a question or statement designed to clarify your understanding or confirm with the other person that you understand what they have said, think or feel. This helps make sure you have the facts correct, are truly hearing what the other person is saying, and reinforces to the other person that you are actively listening to them. It is very useful in solving problems that the other person perceives rather than trying to solve a problem that you perceive but is not the real issue. Examples: So what you’re saying is ...; Are you saying...; So you seem...; It sounds like...; So you feel that...

**Summarizing** is a brief statement of what the parties have talked about, the main points covered and/or agreed to. It is also a good way to bring a conversation to a close. Summarize by announcing that you are giving a summary, i.e. “in summary.” Next, summarize the discussion, keeping to the main points. Remember it is a summary, not a detailed set of minutes. Last, check to make sure the other person understands and agrees with the main points. This ensures accuracy and sets the foundation for follow-up conversations and meeting responsibilities.



## **Crucial Conversations**

are those everyday interactions that happen, those conversations that affect your life.

They often happen when ***opinions vary*** and ***stakes are high***.

Think of a conversation that you have recently had. How might you have used these skills in that conversation?

Essential questions: What questions might you have asked during the conversation to ensure clarity of communication?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Confirmatory paraphrasing: How might you have used paraphrasing to confirm your understanding of the other person's point of view and demonstrate active listening?

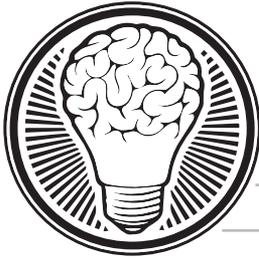
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Summarizing: Write a summary of the conversation here. What are the main points and/or agreements?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Plan for your next crucial conversation. What essential questions might you ask? How will you use paraphrasing? How will you plan to summarize the conversation?





**Dialogue**-the free flow of meaning between two or more people. At the center of every successful conversation is the free flow

of relevant information. People willingly and capably share their views, opinions and articulate theories even when controversial.



Think of a conversation that you need to have, one that might be difficult. How will you consider the questions on page 64 as you prepare for this crucial conversation?



**If you think it, write it.**