

# 3

## Communication and Principles of Transformation

**Healing Principle** *The first step in all healing is communication.*

*“Everything that has happened in your life,  
Everything you have done, is a communication.”*

Chuck Spezzano, co-founder Psychology of Vision

**Materials** • Box of items for exercise 3.2.

**Aims** By the end of this session the participants will have:

- ✓ Undertaken an exercise to focus on body language and tonality.
- ✓ Related the three ways in which people communicate to a significant other.
- ✓ Discussed the principles of transformational communication.

## Introduction

The first step in any positive change or in any transformation is communication. If we want to shift anything in our lives we have to be able to bring it to the surface and speak about it. So to transform our lives we need to become confident communicators and also learn how to communicate effectively. In this module we investigate aspects and types of communication. We will appraise three major forms of communication and discuss principles for transformational communication.

## Levels of Communication

1 hour

The key to understanding communication in our lives is realising that everything is communication. What we do, who we are, what we look like, what problems we have, our illnesses and our successes, are all forms of communication to our world in general and to ourselves in particular.

The first step in any effective communication is to have the courage to communicate what is on your mind. If we don't communicate honestly then the pain we are hiding by our defensive communication will be carried in that communication and others will feel, even sub-consciously, that we are attacking them. If we communicate honestly and without blame this will lead to transformation and change. In truth, we can only really change ourselves in any situation and we start by communication. We begin to understand the dynamics of the worst of fights or situations and therefore move past them by communicating, by building a bridge to the other people and to our potential beyond this place of pain.

Communication is a fascinating subject because we are doing it all the time; it is the grist to the mill of life. Often a parent says to me, my child does not speak with me, or my partner does not speak with me. That might be true in words, but they are still communicating because communication goes on at many levels and at all times; even not speaking is a communication. At the deeper levels of our minds we are always communicating on at least 7 different levels: the Everyday level, the Sexual level, the Power or Political level, the Attacking or Helping level, the Specialness or Relatedness level, the Shamanic level, and the Spiritual level.

## Seven Levels of Communication

Extract from *Healing the Body Through Mind and Metaphor* by Janie Patrick and Chuck Spezzano (2001).

**Everyday** level - the conventional, consensual or agreed upon reality. Information passed at this level is taken at face value.

**Sexual** level - a layer of communication that recognises levels of attraction and flirting. This is the realm of innuendo and double entendre; there will be integrity, authenticity and appropriateness at this level depending on the extent of friendship and bonding present between the people communicating. Where the bonding is not present the communication will feel 'off'.

**Power** or **Political** level - this is a continuum that has to do with assigning power either in terms of truth or who is the boss. In the constant jostling and competition for power, everything about the body is political and is used for winning and losing. Empowerment on the other hand is built on true power and the principle of equality.

**Attacking** or **Helping** level - a continuum based on our general attitude or direction. We either attack others, in which case we are part of the problem, or we help and are part of the solution.

**Specialness** or **Relatedness** level - a continuum which describes how much we use conversation to get attention or for self-aggrandisement, to the other end of the scale where we use communication to share or give to another, we extend ourselves to join another.

**Shamanic** level - where language, energy, ritual and belief are engaged in the simpler, more original mind of the unconscious. This is a level of visionary awareness and psychic gifts, where the power of the mind is used to transform aspects of a consensual reality, usually to help, though sometimes it has been used for harm.

**Spiritual** level - the level of love, light and oneness. This level automatically recognises everyone as spiritual beings, and therefore holy, in spite of any outward form or behaviour.

### Exercise 3.1



Read the poems overleaf with the group. Then take a few minutes and review the text for the different levels of communication.

**Two poems by Hafiz, the great Sufi master:**

**We Should Talk about This Problem**

There is a beautiful creature  
Living in a hole you have dug.

So at night  
I set fruit and grains  
And little pots of wine and mile  
Beside your soft earthen mounds,

And I often sing.

But still, my dear,  
You do not come out.

I have fallen in love with someone  
Who hides inside you.

We should talk about this problem -

Otherwise,  
I will never leave you alone.

**The Gift**

Our  
Union is like this:

You feel cold  
So I reach for a blanket to cover  
Our shivering feet.

A hunger comes into your body  
So I run to my garden  
And start digging potatoes.

You ask for a few words of comfort and guidance,  
I quickly kneel at your side offering you  
This whole book -  
As a gift.

You ache with loneliness one night  
So much you weep

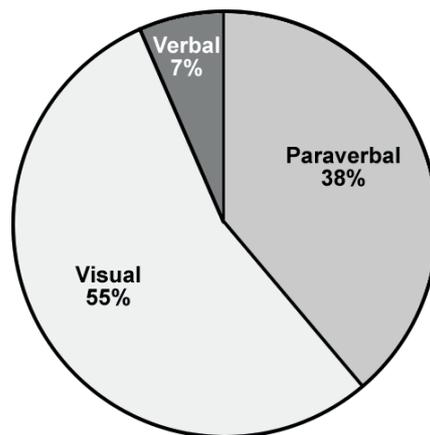
And I say,  
Here's a rope,

Hafiz  
Will be your companion  
For life.

## Talking and Body Language

Albert Mehrabian, an American communications researcher, studied the impact of aspects of communication on a speaker's credibility. He was curious about why some people were not believed when they were stating the truth. How come the message was not communicated?

In order to have a better understanding he broke the aspects of communication down into three levels, the fourth area being the effectiveness of the delivery. His results were:



### Mehrabian's Estimate

From Albert Mehrabian's book *Silent Messages*, Wadsworth Pub Co. (1981).

**Paraverbal** is the voice and tone. How we say things. (38%)

**Visual** is what people see while we are speaking, the body, the posture, the movements; body language. (55%)

**Verbal** represents the words we use while communicating. (7%)

Think of the last time you were with someone who stood with their arms crossed, tapping their foot and looking annoyed, and when you asked them how they were they replied, "I'm fine". Which did you believe, the words or the body language and the tonality? Physical non-verbal messages often send a much louder message.

Of course most of us believe that what we say is the most important form of communication but in the total package it accounts for only 7%. The body language accounts for 55%, which leaves 38% for how we say things. It is therefore important that when we engage another person in communication we listen on at least these levels, for their body will tell us most about their communication, followed by how they say it and lastly what they say.

## Exercise 3.2

The facilitator brings a box filled with fun items, such as a golf ball or a silly toy or a household item, and asks one participant to volunteer to talk about this for up to three



minutes. Afterwards the group gives feedback to the presenter regarding both his or her body language and tonality.

**Alternative exercise:** With buddies, each pick an event during the last week that demonstrates a breakdown in communication with someone, and look at how our own communication was ineffective, in body language, tonality or content.

## Listening

Another vital aspect of communication is how we listen to another's communication. If you would like to read or study further on this subject Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) has some excellent tools and teachings that go far beyond what we are looking at here. But these very basic tools can help ensure that our communication is successful and transformational, which is especially important to us when we are speaking with a loved one.

There are four basic ways people listen and absorb communication, namely:

1. **Visual** i.e. they see things, they receive messages primarily through actions
2. **Auditory** i.e. they hear things, they receive messages primarily through words
3. **Kinesthetic** i.e. they feel things, they receive messages primarily through touching, and emotions.
4. **Intuitive** i.e. they sense the world within them, and know answers about the world around them.

Although there are other aspects of ourselves that listen in other ways, I believe this is a good starting point. A full understanding of these four forms of listening can help us to relate effectively with others around us.

It is important that we assess the most effective way we can pitch our communication, or it may not be heard or received.

One partner may bring home flowers every night to demonstrate their love, but that is the action of a visual person. If their partner is not visual they will sometimes feel their partner never demonstrates their love. If the partner is auditory instead, they would hear their partner's love for them by being told of it, or by being whispered to, because they listen to what is being said, not to what is being presented. Equally if one partner is kinesthetic they will not feel loved by being given flowers, their main way of feeling love is by touch, by feeling. Kinesthetics may appear to be slow, but that is often because they take information deep inside and process it thoroughly. Strong kinesthetics are often challenged by normal schooling systems, which tend towards the visual and auditory spectrum; usually visual people process information very quickly and can leave kinesthetics behind if they are unaware.

We all share all four aspects in varying measures, but good communicators learn to communicate on all levels to a group of people. When speaking with an individual then it is important to listen to the words of the other's communication, which will tell us, often sub-consciously, which category they use most.

For instance, a kinesthetic person in reply might say, "That does not feel right", or an auditory person might say, "That does not sound right" or "let me hear that again". A visual person will say something like "I can see how that works". An intuitive person would have a sense of how things work, and may talk about their "gut reaction", or the "hairs on the back of my neck", or a "sixth sense". The language people use tells us metaphorically their way of receiving communication.

### Exercise 3.3



Share what form of communication a significant other in your life or recent past is strongest in and then what you think you are strongest in. Also share how this understanding gives you insights into your relationships.

## Transformational Communication

1 hour

All healing starts with communication. To become skillful in communication is to become more effective in all areas of life.

In communicating with another we need to engage with them, to enter a level of rapport and connectedness with them.

To communicate transformationally requires us to practice and to adopt a policy of no blame-no fault in our communication. If at anytime we start to blame or attack while communicating with another the communication will stop. Many times we set out to communicate but the outcome is not what we had hoped for. Let's look at the following principles for communicating in an effective and transformational manner.

### The Twelve Principles for Transformational Communication

1. There are no BAD GUYS. We can all win.
2. Blame stops communication. Only no-fault communication is effective. Everybody has to be included in the solution. There is always a Win – Win solution.
3. The outcome of any communication is what we intend it to be! Know your purpose and set your goal beforehand. Nobody can make us feel anything. We are responsible for our emotional state.

4. To bridge any problems we are asked to be physically, emotionally and mentally present.
5. Do not interrupt, because it stops communication. We interrupt because we cannot stand the feeling coming up and the competition is too great.
6. Where we attack or defend we will get attacked. Like attracts like.
7. If we insist on being right we cannot change and the situation will not move forward. Surrender, listen and learn.
8. Compromise or adjustment is not resolution. Keep communicating until there is resolution. Resolution occurs when all parties get what they want or there is a Win - Win
9. We are totally accountable for our behaviour and the behaviour of those around us.
10. Trust others with what is really on your mind. Our 'with-holds' are a form of attack that don't allow for resolution.
11. Recognize that another's communication always has some significance to you and the situation.
12. In any disagreement or conflict both sides are feeling the same emotion at the deepest level. To end power struggles, express appreciation. Expressing appreciation helps to end power struggles.

### Exercise 3.4

Discuss the principles.



## Unfinished Business and Transformational Communication

Look at the chapter below on Transformational Communication (Way 34) from *50 Ways to Get Along with Absolutely Anyone* by Chuck Spezzano, along with the exercise.

*"We have spoken about the unfinished business from the past interfering with the present. Now is the time to examine this in a bit more detail. There is a term called 'transference,' which refers to the fact that in any situation where there are problems, it is a carry over from feelings, problems and unfinished relationships from the past. This means that if we are not enjoying love, joy, creativity and abundance, we are trying to heal the past in the present and that our present problems are actually past ones in disguise. If we have the awareness that upsetting feelings are just unfinished pain from the past, we will be both more motivated and have more understanding of healing the situation in the present. In*

*In other words, if as a woman we have an unhealed situation with our father, it can affect our relationships with our brothers, boyfriends, friends, bosses, husband, and sons. While these are the most common relationships affected by father issues, carry over feelings with father can occur with any of our ongoing relationships.*

*The implications of this concept can be staggering because it means everything that is not love is transference. Our adult heartbreaks go back to childhood heartbreaks as our adult failures go back to childhood failures. Situations in our lives now actually reflect a number of relationships both past and present. This means that unfinished healing issues we had with our family while growing up will have an effect over our entire lives. As we forgive those people from the past it can have a transformative effect on our life now and if we forgive people in our present life it will have an ameliorating effect on our relationships from the past.*

*Many times when we have some upset, which is unfinished business in the present, we can ask ourselves, 'what relationship or situation does this refer to from my past'? This gives us an added dimension for healing when we realise that when we are trying to get needs met in the present relationships they are actually unmet needs from the past. This is what makes the extra stress and pressure on our present communication and relationship now because we are not only talking to someone in the present, but also to some one from the past. No wonder communication gets confused at times. Understanding transference also allows us to become more accountable for present situations because it lets us realise that we have brought our past into the present for healing. This is one of the reasons for manifesting this present situation or issue with our present problem person.*

### **Exercise**

*One of the best ways to resolve situations or issues with problem people is through communication. Even if it may not be appropriate to communicate at this deep a level with someone with whom you are having a problem, it is extremely helpful to know this principle. First the communication can begin by setting a goal as to what you want to occur as the result of the communication. All through the communication, especially if it seems to take a downturn for the worse, reset the goal you want to occur. Secondly take responsibility for your feelings. If you think someone made you feel something, you don't understand how feelings come from within us. Our feelings are our responsibility. They come from choices we make in reaction to certain events, even though it seems like the other made us feel it. Negative emotions come from some kind of judgment we made. If our feelings are negative we have typically been carrying them inside ourselves for a while. Our ego looks for new events to compound our pain while our higher mind looks for a place to heal the old pain inside.*

*In your communication, commit to and support both of you winning. Share with the other what's not working for you with an attitude of responsibility for your feelings, thoughts*

*and perception.*

*Once you've shared what isn't working for you, talk about what you are feeling and experiencing. Take responsibility for your feelings and ask for the other's support. Do not expect them to have to change because you have certain feelings. Share your feelings and clarify your experience around the event. They may also spontaneously share their experience. Never blame in attitude, tone or words, it's just a form of attack. Communication stops when blame begins. It's a signal that you've become afraid to step forward and are using the attack, fight or judgment to cover your fear and try to control them to get your way. Don't use your feeling to stop yourself. Use them to help free both yourself and them.*

*After they share or clarify, to take the communication to a deeper level, feel your feelings around the situation. Share your feelings as deeply as possible and then reflect on events from earlier in your life that led to these feelings. While you may tell your partner the story, emphasise what you were feeling. Sometimes a story doesn't emerge, just deeper, older but familiar feelings. If you do not attack your partner by displacing your old feelings from the past on them now, they will typically be motivated to support you. Paradoxically, the more you share all these bad feelings, the better you feel, having freed yourself from either the pattern itself or a layer of the pattern by your communication. As you learn to share like this, you build your confidence in your ability to communicate and bring yourself from turmoil to peace. This type of sharing frees you and the person with whom the feeling came up.*

*Now if it is inappropriate to share with this person because of a work situation, ask a friend to role-play the problem person for you as best they can. By following the principle of transformational communication you can heal yourself of the past that is trying to be healed in the present."*

Now pick a card for someone to share an aspect of communication that is not working in their lives, and do the exercise with the support of the group.



## **Subconscious Communication**

As we have said, everything about us is a form of communication. While some of those communications are conscious, chosen by us with our full awareness, there is often more going on. Consider, for instance, how we communicate with the clothes we wear. When we are going out for a date or a meal we often take time to dress well, and when we are just hanging out at home we tend to dress more casually. These two styles obviously reflect our moods as well as our intentions.

It is also true that some of us don't find dressing important and dress up or down for other reasons or in other situations, but keeping in mind that all actions are some form of communication lets take some time and consider this within the group now. Sometimes we notice people wear clothes that have a pattern on their shirt or blouse that is in contrast

with their trousers or skirt - one may be horizontal stripes and the other may be vertical dots. This clash would look as if two different people chose the clothes and may be a reflection of how the wearer is in two minds about something.

### Exercise 3.5



Take a few minutes and observe the group. Discuss briefly the idea that the clothes people are wearing and how they are wearing them is a reflection of some hidden communication. Also discuss other aspects of appearance and what we feel is being communicated.

### Conclusion

To complete this module, one participant stands before the others and each other participant in turn stands up and says one positive thing about the first participant in a wholly believable way. Repeat this exercise with each person, including the facilitator.

Check in with your buddy, and perhaps use the Twelve Principles of Transformational Communication to transform your relationship with each other.