Chapter Eight
Steps to Improve Performance: Communicate

Instructor Information

DURATION 90 minutes

EQUIPMENT Chalkboard, marker board or flip chart; markers or chalk; laptop computer and SVGA projector, or overhead projector; VHS videotape player and monitor

TOOLBOX Required: Trigger Video—*Classic Communication*
Discussion Questions—*Supervisor-Employee Relationship Questions*

Suggested: Exercise—*Supervisor Self-Assessment*
Activities in Listening/Expressing—*Story Chain*
—*Picture Relay*
—*Drawing by Direction*

Exercise—*Interpersonal Communication Inventory*

OBJECTIVES 1) Establish the connection between the supervisor-employee relationship and communication
2) Develop improved communication skills
3) Reinforce the connection between motivated performance and good communication

TASKS 1) Identify the components of a good supervisor-employee relationship
2) Conduct the *Supervisor Self-Assessment* exercise
3) Relate the six elements of a good communicator
4) Conduct listening/expressing activities
5) Conduct the *Interpersonal Communication Inventory* exercise
RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Overview

Chapter 8, the last chapter of new instruction, is the last chapter of the general improvement section, and—some might argue—the most important topic when discussing motivation. We have covered all the other components, and we have even mentioned communication several times throughout the course. We have said how important it is, but we have not instructed our participants how to communicate. You, as instructor, must demonstrate to the group that the final crucial step in improving worker performance is communication.

Communication between supervisors and their workers has a direct influence on the workers’ motivation. Treating workers with respect, soliciting workers’ input, and keeping workers apprised of what’s going on in the organization—are all aspects of this motivation.

The objectives of this chapter are to present, discuss, and practice (through group activities) good communication principles and techniques; and to have the participants evaluate their own communication skills, their supervisor-worker relationship (as the foundation of effective communication), and their supervisory skills. The need for clear, accurate, objective, and concise communication to get their messages across must be demonstrated. The participants should come away with a better understanding of and commitment to the principles, procedures, and techniques of effective communication.

Key Issues

1) Supervisory-Employee Relationship—A good relationship between supervisors and their people generally results in good worker performance…and is the foundation of effective communication.

2) Self-concept—is the most important single factor affecting your communication with others. A strong self-concept is necessary for good, satisfying communication.

3) Effective listening—uses intelligence and emotions to figure out the meaning of what was said. It involves such techniques as “listening with the third ear” and “active listening.

4) Expressing ourselves clearly—People seldom read our minds. We have to be sure our meaning is understood by our listeners.

5) Handling anger—can be expressed in good rather than bad ways. Expressing emotions is important to building good relationships with others.

6) Talking about yourself—The more I know about you and the more you know about me, the better our communication will be.

7) Owning problems—You must know whose problem it is before it can be solved. An important function of supervisors is to deal with their own problems and to help workers deal with theirs.

Preparation

1) Read through the chapter and make any notes or changes you feel are needed to customize the presentation for your audience.

2) Prepare a recap/transition from Chapter 7 to Chapter 8.

3) Review the Classic Communication videotape and discussion questions.

4) Review the activities/exercises. Complete them yourself prior to presenting this chapter.

5) Prepare materials for the listening/expressing activities.
INTRODUCTION

Develop and present a transition from Chapter 7 to Chapter 8. Be sure to relay to the group that Communication is the last chapter before the action plans. We have covered all the components of the action plans and this chapter will provide the “oil” that allows all the components to operate correctly.

Then, discuss the objectives.
8-4 Steps to Improve Performance: Communicate

THE SUPERVISOR-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

Show Transparency 8.2. Tell the group that, before getting into topics directly connected with communication, you want to talk about the supervisor-employee relationship, which certainly has a bearing on communication.

One of the keys to good worker performance is the relationship between supervisors and their people. It's also the starting point for all communications between them.

On the Job

Workers should be able to answer certain questions about their work, their organization, and how they are treated by their supervisor. Those who can answer the questions we're about to go over are usually motivated and hard-working persons. Those who cannot answer these questions tend to be less motivated and have lower performance. Imagine how your people would answer them.

Have the participants turn to the Supervisor-Employee Relationship Questions found in Chapter 8 of their Workbooks (and on the next two pages here in your Instructor's Manual). Point out that these questions are from the employees' point of view. Invite the group to make comments or raise questions as you read the questions aloud, or afterwards.
The Supervisor-
Employee
Relationship

1. What is expected of me—by my supervisor, by the organization? Unless I know, I can’t do what I’m expected to do.

2. Do I understand my duties? I can do my best work only if I understand what I am supposed to do, and when, where, and how I am supposed to do it.

3. How much am I expected to do? If I don’t know, my performance will suffer because I’ll not have goals to work toward.

4. Have I received proper training? If I’m poorly trained, I’ll likely become frustrated and lose my motivation to do good work.

5. Do I have room to grow in my job? A boring, repetitive job with few challenges will soon make me miserable.

6. Can I exercise my own judgment on the job? When my organization allows me to use my brains to solve problems, I can develop independence and self-esteem.

7. Have I been trained in jobs other than my own? Cross-training gives me a greater sense of accomplishment and a better understanding of the whole work process.
8. Do I have a future with this organization? A smart supervisor explains how I can get better pay and advance.

9. Are my working conditions safe and comfortable? Nobody can feel happy or healthy in a workplace that is hazardous, dirty, poorly ventilated, poorly lit, or broken down.

10. Is my supervisor reasonable? If my supervisor gives me unreasonable assignments, or is inconsistent or unfair to me or to other employees, I will likely respond with resentment and poor performance.

11. What will happen to me as a result of my performance? My motivation is strongly influenced by the rewards that I expect to receive because of my performance.

12. Does my supervisor tell me when I’ve done a good job? A good supervisor is as free with praise as with criticism.

13. How can I improve my performance? Unless I know what to improve and how to improve, I cannot get better.

14. Do I understand my pay and benefits? When I understand how my compensation works, I’m more likely to feel properly paid for my work.
15. Do I know what is going on in my organization? Knowing what’s happening in the organization helps me to feel a part of it and keeps me informed about what’s coming up.

16. Do I have chances to suggest how to improve things? When I’m given such opportunities, I feel good about myself and the organization.

17. If I have questions about how my work assignments or schedules are developed, do I get answers? A good supervisor answers these questions as part of treating me fairly.

In discussing these questions with the participants, again cite the value of supervisors having regular one-on-one meetings with their people so that questions can be raised, concerns can be voiced, options can be addressed, determinations can be made, information can be explained, and supervisor feedback can be given—all directly from or to the individual. This way, communications are tailored to the specific worker.
When we think of the ways that supervisors get to know their subordinates and vice versa, we usually think of getting acquainted “on the job” first. This is only natural since the relationship is that of coworkers. But the opportunity for supervisors to learn about their workers and workers to learn about their supervisors should not be limited to the workplace.

Discuss with the group the opportunities for—and the benefits and/or pitfalls of—socializing together during nonworking hours. Is it possible and advisable to try to build supervisor-employee relationships in settings away from the workplace? Ask the group for suggestions of ways that supervisors and workers can learn about each other off the job. Suggestions may range from interactions that are more organized and formalized to ones that are more casual and spur-of-the-moment. Activities such as bowling or playing softball or golf, going hunting or fishing, stopping after work for a drink, and attending a sporting event may be brought up. Talk about them.
Once you've finished discussing the Supervisor-Employee Relationship Questions, we suggest you have the participants do the Supervisor Self-Assessment exercise.

If you do this exercise, project Transparency 8-3. Otherwise, go on to Transparency 8.4 now.

The Supervisor Self-Assessment exercise is found in the Workbook. It consists of 18 questions covering many aspects of supervisors’ responsibilities. By answering the questions, the participants can assess their supervisory skills.

In doing the exercise, ask the participants to complete the questions individually, without discussion. Then ask them to “grade” themselves. Because of the personal nature of the questions, there should be no discussion of the questions or the participants' responses.
The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

Communication is the act of exchanging information with others. It's a two-way activity, an interchange of ideas, facts, opinions, and even feelings. Communication includes writing and using signs, but we're mainly concerned with spoken communication.

In this chapter you'll learn about the elements of good communication, and how communication influences worker motivation. You may also have the opportunity to do a little self-evaluation of your current interpersonal communication skills.
Let’s look at a video. Those of you who enjoyed the encouragement video, should like this one as well. Most of you should recognize this. I want you to pay close attention, because I’ll have a few questions.

Play the trigger videotape, *Classic Communication*. It includes two clips from old films. One clip is an excerpt from an Abbott and Costello comedy sketch, called “Who’s On First.” The other clip is a brief segment from the Paul Newman film, *Cool Hand Luke*.

Running time is about 3 minutes.

Does this video describe your experiences with communication?

One thing’s for sure: Good communicating doesn’t happen by accident.

Several components combine to make it successful.
Read aloud the six elements of good communication.

To be good communicators, supervisors need to deal with all of these elements. They relate to workers and supervisors:

- Having a strong self-concept
- Listening effectively
- Expressing clearly
- Handling anger
- Talking about yourself
- Owning problems

Let’s examine each of these elements.
Having a Strong Self-Concept

Discuss “self-concept”—what it is and why it’s important.

The most important single factor affecting your communication with others is your self-concept. Self-concept is the way people see themselves and feel about themselves. While situations may change from moment to moment or place to place, your concept of yourself always affects the way you communicate.

Importance of the Self-Concept

Your self-concept is who you are, what you stand for, where you live, what you do and don’t do, what is important to you, and what you believe. It is a lens through which you see, hear, judge, and understand everything around you.

A strong self-concept is necessary for good, satisfying communication. A weak self-concept, on the other hand, often distorts your view of how others see you, making you uncomfortable when dealing with other people.
A Weak Self-Concept

If you have a poor view of yourself, you may have trouble talking to others, admitting when you are wrong, showing your feelings, accepting constructive criticism, or speaking up for your ideas when they’re different from those of other people. You may be afraid that people won’t like you if you disagree with them.

Further, you may feel that you’re not “as good as” other people, lack confidence, and think that your ideas are uninteresting to others and not worth talking about. Typically, you closely watch what you say to avoid disapproval or disagreement. You may even keep to yourself to avoid contacts with others as much as possible.

Ask the group if they have ever run into this.
Are they like this?
Have they ever had a crew member like this?
Forming the Self-Concept

- Treat workers with respect
- Demonstrate that you value what they say
- Show concern about them as individuals

You learn who you are from the ways you are treated by other people in your life. By communicating with others, you learn whether you are liked or not liked, acceptable or unacceptable, worthy of respect or not, a success or a failure. If you are to have a strong self-concept, you need love, respect, and acceptance from the important people in your life. Your self-concept is largely shaped by those who have loved—or have not loved—you.

As a supervisor, you are a very important person in the lives of your people. If you treat them with respect and demonstrate through your communications with them that you value what they have to say and that you are concerned about them as individuals, you will help them develop a strong self-concept. The way you treat your workers and communicate with them will be mirrored in the way they treat you. When people with a strong self-concept communicate with each other, they are willing to share their ideas and emotions—and this results in improved understanding and improved performance.
LISTENING EFFECTIVELY

Open up the subject of listening effectively by displaying Transparency 8.8 with this statement by the Greek philosopher, Diogenes (Die-ODGE-a-neeze):

“We have two ears and only one tongue in order that we hear more and speak less.”

I think there’s a lot of “food for thought” in this statement by a Greek philosopher. What do you think? [See if anyone has a comment.] Let’s spend a few minutes on the subject of listening.

Until a few years ago, most viewpoints about communication focused on skills of self-expression and persuasion. Little attention was paid to listening. However, everybody needs information that can be gotten only by listening.

“Listening” is more complicated than “hearing.” Hearing is done with the ears, but listening also uses intelligence and emotions to figure out the meaning of what was said. Good listening achieves its aim when the listener understands the speaker’s meaning. And that’s the whole goal of communication.
Talk about the notion of listening with the “third ear.”

Good listening can be thought of as “listening with the third ear.” A good listener listens to words and the meanings behind the words. A good listener’s third ear hears what is said between sentences and without words, what is expressed soundlessly, what the speaker feels and thinks.

Clearly, good listening is an important part of communication. The good listener works with the speaker in developing meaning and reaching understanding.
Several things can improve listening skills:

- Listeners should have a *reason or purpose* for listening.
- It’s important for listeners not to judge what is being said *right away*.
- Listeners should *resist distractions*—noises, views, other people—and focus on the speaker.
- Listeners should *wait before answering* the speaker. Listeners who answer too quickly haven’t had enough time to think about what has been said.
Continue explaining how to improve listening skills, after projecting Transparency 8.13.

- Listeners should repeat what the speaker says in their own words, and ask the speaker if that is what was meant.
- Listeners should seek the important themes of what the speaker says by listening through the words for the real meaning.
- Listeners should use the time difference between the rate of speech (100–150 words per minute) and the rate of thought (400–500 words per minute) to reflect upon content and search for meaning.
- Listeners should be ready to respond to the speaker’s comments.
Active Listening

- Respect other person’s need to communicate
- Listen to what the person says
- Respond with a restatement of what you think the message means
- Speaker then verifies or corrects the message

Through “active listening,” listeners show their respect for a speaker’s need to communicate. They also demonstrate their sincerity in wanting to understand the speaker’s meaning. Here’s what’s involved: First, the speaker completes the statement (or question). The listener then responds with a restatement, in his or her own words, of what the speaker means. For example:

- Speaker: “The deadline for this work assignment is not realistic.”
- Listener: “You feel you’re pressured to get the work assignment done.”

If listeners are going to understand what speakers mean, they need to think about what the speakers are thinking and feeling. Restating what they think the speakers mean is a way for listeners to check how well they understand what has been said. The speakers of course can then verify that what the listeners understood to be their meaning is indeed correct OR, if not correct, set the listeners straight.
Active Listening

- Respect other person’s need to communicate
- Listen to what the person says
- Respond with a restatement of what you think the message means
- Speaker then verifies or corrects the message

For example, in response to the listener’s restatement:

- Speaker: “Yes, I do feel pressured to get the work assignment done…and furthermore ______.”

The speaker, seeing that the listener is understanding him or her fully, may be encouraged to communicate even more information and/or feelings.
Benefits of Active Listening

- Communication is easier and more accurate
- Listener can understand what speakers mean and how they feel about issues
- Acceptance is communicated and trust between people is increased
- Problem solving becomes easier

Now describe the benefits of active listening, from the points listed on the transparency.

Active listening makes communication easier and more accurate. Listeners learn how to zero in on what speakers mean and how they feel about the issues at hand. Active listening communicates acceptance and increases trust between people. It can also make it easier to solve problems.
Tips for Active Listening

- Be careful not to change the speaker’s intended meaning with your restatement.
- Don’t merely repeat the speaker’s statement.
- Don’t use it if there’s no time to deal with the situation or speaker is asking only for facts.
- Know when to stop using it by being sensitive to speaker’s nonverbal messages.

Here are some precautions as you strive to be an effective active listener:

- Be careful that you don’t manipulate a speaker with your restatement. In other words, avoid changing the speaker’s intended meaning by slanting it one way or another in your response. Some speakers might be easily intimidated into backing down if you misinterpret their statement, or if your feedback sounds the least bit disapproving.
- Don’t merely repeat the speaker’s statement or question.
- Don’t use active listening when there is no time to deal with the situation or when the speaker is asking only for factual information.
- Know when to stop giving feedback by being sensitive to nonverbal messages the speaker may be trying to send you.

Observing these tips will make your active listening a more effective communication skill.
Expressing Clearly

- Difficult to say what we mean and express how we feel
- Common mistake: assuming others know what we mean even when we’re unclear in our speech (“If it’s clear to me it must be clear to you.”)
- Important to make ourselves clear and to check our meaning with our listeners
- Need for our communications to show that we accept one another—avoiding responses that indicate non-acceptance

EXPRESSING CLEARLY

Show Transparency 8.17 and talk about these points related to clear expression.

Good listening is necessary for communication, but many people find it just as hard to say what they mean or to express what they feel. They often just assume that the other person understands what they mean, even when they are careless or unclear in their speech. They seem to think that people should be able to read their mind: “If it is clear to me, it must be clear to you too.” This view makes communication difficult.

A “Longer” Board

Think about this: A supervisor sent a worker to the lumber yard for a “longer” board. The worker thought he knew what the supervisor wanted and went to the lumber yard, but the “longer” board he brought back was still three feet too short. The supervisor got angry and accused the worker of being stupid and not listening. The supervisor had simply figured that since he knew what he
meant by “longer,” the worker would also know. He hadn’t bothered to make himself clear or to check his meaning with the worker.

The listener must guess what the poor communicator means. Both the listener and the communicator then act according to what they think has been said. Problems can easily result.

Remember that statement I showed you earlier? “The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.” Poor communicators fool themselves into believing they have put their message across.
Communicating Nonacceptance

In both work and personal relationships, it is very important for us to clearly express that we accept one another. However, there are ways of responding to situations that show we do not accept other people. Some of us, when listening to others, respond in one or more of the following ways:

1. *Ordering, Directing:* “You have to…”
2. *Warning, Threatening:* “You’d better not…”
3. *Preaching, Moralizing:* “You ought to…” or “You shouldn’t…”
4. *Advising, Giving Solutions:* “Why don’t you…”
5. *Lecturing, Informing:* “Here are the facts…”
Continue discussing typical [non-accepting] listener responses.

7. Praising, Agreeing: “You’re right...”
8. Name-calling, Shaming: “You’re stupid...”
10. Sympathizing, Supporting: “You’ll be okay...”
11. Questioning, Probing: “Why did you...” or “Why didn’t you...”
12. Withdrawing, Avoiding: “Let’s forget it...”

Some of these types of responses may communicate to the person who was speaking that it is not acceptable to feel or behave the way he or she feels or behaves. If this happens, the speaker might become defensive about new ideas, resist changing behavior, or start to justify certain feelings...or become silent because the listener doesn’t seem very interested.
ACTIVITIES IN LISTENING/EXPRESSING

**Story Chain**

8.20 Story Chain

After displaying Transparency 8.20, ask the group if they (or their kids) have ever played a game sometimes called “Story Chain.” In it, the participants form a circle and attempt to pass a whispered message from person to person all the way around and back to its starting point. Although this is a well-worn party game, it illustrates clearly how hard it is to keep a message unchanged as it’s sent down the line. Tell the participants you want them to play a version of this game. [If you elect not to use this activity and/or the other two activities, skip Transparencies 8.20–8.22 and go directly to 8.23.] Follow these steps:

1. Make up a message that’s not too simple but also not too complicated. Make it work-related if you like. Include enough detail to make the message interesting and challenging.

2. Write the message on a slip of paper so you won’t forget it, and so that no one will later dispute what the original message was.

3. Show the written message to the first person, so that no one else sees it.

4. Direct the first person to whisper the message in the ear of the next person in the group, and so on (getting up from their chairs as necessary). Encourage everyone to say the message clearly and directly into the ear of the next participant so that the others won’t overhear it.

5. See that the message continues to be passed along from participant to participant until it returns to the person who heard it directly from you. Ask this person to say it aloud as he or she receives it. At the same time, write the original message on the board or flip chart.
If the Story Chain message wasn’t overly simple, and if the participants are typical of people everywhere, what the first person says aloud will vary somewhat from the original—to put it mildly. Discuss what is learned from such games.

See how the group’s observations compare with the following conclusions. You may want to summarize them on the board or flip chart...or just read them aloud:

- Games such as this are exercises in both speaking clearly and listening carefully.
- No matter how clearly the message is spoken, if the hearer isn’t listening carefully he or she may miss or confuse some part of it.
- No matter how carefully a hearer is trying to listen, if the speaker doesn’t say the message clearly the hearer will have difficulty understanding it.
- Memory hardly plays a role because the message is passed along immediately after it’s heard.
- Some garbling of messages occurs because some words sound like others.
- Other factors that affect the outcome of these games (list theirs and/or your own).

If desirable, play Story Chain again with a different message. Or try the game described on the next page, Picture Relay.
“Picture Relay” is a variation of Story Chain. If you choose to have the group play it, display Transparency 8.21. If not, go on to Transparency 8.22.

Here’s how to play Picture Relay:

1. Use a picture as the “message”—a sketch that you’ve drawn or a picture from another source. The picture should consist of elements that can be described in words (other than colors).

2. Show the picture to the first person only. No one else should see it.

3. Direct the first person to whisper a description of what he or she saw in the picture to the next person, and so on all around the group.

4. When the description comes to the last person, instruct him or her to draw the picture—based on the information received—on the board or flip chart.

Discuss the group’s observations. For one thing, they should appreciate the importance of using accurate, unambiguous descriptive terms that communicate a lot in few words.
Here’s another activity that highlights the challenges of clear communication. This one also involves drawing. One participant has to draw a picture as he or she is guided by the oral description and direction of another participant. If you choose to play this game, project Transparency 8.22. Otherwise, bypass it and go straight to Transparency 8.23.

Here are the steps and rules:

1. Select a few pictures—photos, clippings from magazines, etc.—of clearly discernible scenes containing common objects and elements.

2. Divide the participants into pairs or small groups. [Alternatively, if your overall group is not very large, you may prefer to do this activity with just one group—essentially one “ describer,” one “listener/drawer,” and everyone else as observers.

3. In each pair or small group call for a volunteer “listener/drawer” or designate one. Have this person sit at a table or desk with blank paper and pencil at the ready.

4. In each case position the partner or remaining group members behind the listener/drawer and face them in the opposite direction.

5. Give each partner or group a picture and instruct them to direct the listener/drawer in drawing it in response to their verbal descriptions. When the listeners/drawers are directed by a group, the group should determine how they will accomplish their direction without causing confusion. (For example, they may choose one of their group as “speaker;” or they may want to each speak in turn so that collectively they feel they have adequately described the picture.)
6. The listener/drawer must not see the picture or the partner/group members while they describe the picture. He or she cannot ask any questions of them.

7. The partner or group must not see the drawing. Allow them enough time to complete their direction, and for the listeners/drawers to finish their drawings.

Discuss the exercise: the aspects that made communication so difficult; how it would have been easier if the listeners/drawers had been allowed to ask questions and/or if the partners/groups had been able to view the drawing while providing their direction; and why it’s crucial to use clear, objective terms in describing things to listeners.

Alternatively, perhaps you know of another activity that demonstrates clearly the communication issues we’re addressing here—an activity from your own experience that you feel would be worth trying on the group. Maybe a different game or a role play would fit in very well at this point. You might want to add it (or them) here, or use it (or them) in place of one or more of the preceding activities. If so, go right ahead.

Just be sure you accomplish the instructional points. And be aware of the time you’ll be using and how any additions or changes will affect the course schedule.
HANDLING ANGER

8.23 Handling Anger

Talk about handling anger, in terms of “holding it in” and expressing emotions.

When a person cannot deal with anger, communication problems often result.

Holding Anger In

Some people handle their anger by holding it in, because they are afraid that if they show their anger other people will show theirs. Such people tend to think that showing an unpleasant emotion will cause problems or arguments. They may become upset even when others just disagree with them.

Expressing Emotions

Expressing emotions is important to building good relationships with others. People need to learn to express angry feelings in a good way rather than a bad way.
Expressions Emotions

- Be aware of your emotions
- Admit your emotions
- Own your emotions
- Investigate your emotions
- Express the emotions you are feeling
- Integrate your emotions with your intellect and will

8.24 Expressing Emotions

8.24 Transparency 8.24 lists several guidelines for expressing one’s emotions. Explain them as described in more detail below:

The following guidelines can be helpful:

- **Be aware** of your emotions.
- **Admit** your emotions. Do not ignore or deny them.
- **Own** your emotions. Accept responsibility for what you do.
- **Investigate** your emotions. Understand why you feel the way you do. Be sure who you are angry with and why.
- **Express** the emotions you are feeling. Tell a person why you are upset with him or her.
- **Integrate** your emotions with your intellect and your will. Allow yourself to learn and grow as a person.

Emotions should not be held in. They should be identified, thought about, and expressed. Then people can make any changes they feel are necessary and move on with life.
Talking truthfully and fully about yourself—showing people who you are—is necessary for good communication. Two persons cannot really communicate with or get to know each other unless they can both talk about themselves. The more I know about you and the more you know about me, the better our communication will be. The more the supervisor learns about the workers, the more he or she understands what they want from their job and how they want to be treated.
Talking About Yourself

- Our ability to talk about ourselves shows a healthy personality. We must be able to tell others who we are before we can truly know who we are and act according to our true selves.

- What keeps us from talking about ourselves?
  --Fear of not being accepted, liked, loved

Your ability to talk about yourself shows that you have a healthy personality. One writer puts it this way:

“I have to be free and able to say my thoughts to you, to tell you about my judgments and values, to expose to you my fears and frustrations, to admit to you my failures and shames, to share my triumphs, before I can really be sure of what it is that I am and can become. I must be able to tell you who I am before I can know who I am. And I must know who I am before I can act truly, that is, in accordance with my true self.”

What Keeps Us from Talking About Ourselves?

To know yourself and to have satisfying relationships with others, you must show others who you are. However, this is not always easy. Many of us are afraid that if we let others know what we really think, feel, and want, they may not like us.

Many people are afraid that they are not totally acceptable to others, that parts of themselves are unlovable, that they are unworthy. As a result, people watch what they say and talk about things that don’t really matter to them.
Trust

- People are not likely to talk about themselves when they feel threatened
- The fear of opening up to others can be replaced with trust
- One person’s trust helps create trust in others
- Good communicators create an atmosphere of trust

The fear of opening up to another person can be replaced with trust. People are not likely to talk about themselves when they feel threatened. They will only do so when they feel they can trust the people around them. Sometimes when one person risks talking about him- or herself, other people feel able to do the same. Trust creates more trust. The good communicator creates an atmosphere of trust where everyone feels free to talk about themselves and the things that are important to them.
OWNING PROBLEMS

Project Transparency 8.28 and explain the concept of "owning problems," presenting the examples given in the text below:

Since active listening is most appropriate when a person expresses feelings about a problem, it's necessary to decide whose problem it is. One must know whose problem it is before it can be solved, and the best person to solve a problem is the person who "owns" it. Consider the following examples:

- Joe is married and has several children. He comes to work each day and does his job well. However, he is continually having money problems and constantly complaining to you about how little he makes. His behavior does not interfere with you or your job. The problem of inadequate income is Joe's. You don't determine how much Joe will make; the agency does that. If Joe can't live on what he earns from his job, that's his problem.

- Fred is responsible for maintaining an inventory of equipment and material for the garage. He enjoys his job and gets along with people. For the most part, he does his job well. However, sometimes he fails to order material in a timely manner. When this happens, you have to stop what you are doing and go get the needed items. You also get angry about never having enough time to get things done. This is your problem. You are the only person who can solve it.
Doris has been hired as a truck driver. She does her job very well and doesn’t interfere with your doing your job. In this case, there is no problem.

One major objective of communication is to recognize problems and identify ownership. An important function of the supervisor is to deal with his or her own problems and to help workers deal with theirs.

So those are the six elements of good communication: having a strong self-concept, listening effectively, expressing clearly, handling anger, talking about yourself, and owning problems.
Communication between supervisors and workers has a direct influence on the workers’ motivation. Workers who are treated with respect and are shown that they are valuable members of the organization respond in positive ways, resulting in improved performance. Workers whose input is solicited and who are kept apprised of what is happening in the organization get involved with improving performance. Thus, supervisors must strive to improve their ability to communicate with their people if they want to improve performance.
Project Transparency 8.30 if you are going to have the group do the Interpersonal Communication Inventory exercise. Otherwise go directly to Transparency 8.31.

Have the participants turn to the “Interpersonal Communication Inventory” in Chapter 8 of their Workbook. Explain that this inventory gives them an opportunity to make an objective study of their own interpersonal communication skills—giving them a good idea of how well they communicate with others. Invite them, at their earliest convenience, to answer the 40 inventory questions and then score their responses. Since answering the questions will take them a fair amount of time—with each moving at his or her own pace—and because no discussion of the scoring results is necessary, it’s best to do this exercise individually and outside the classroom.

Discuss the use of this inventory as a tool and refer the group to their Toolbox for an additional blank copy.
SUMMARY/REVIEW

Key Points

- Strive for good supervisor-employee relationships; they generally result in good employee performance.
- Understand and develop strong self-concepts—in yourself and in your people.
- Practice listening to others effectively—an important element of communication.
- Practice giving clear instructions; don’t expect others to know what you mean.
- Learn to express anger in positive ways.

Show Transparency 8.31 and begin reviewing the chapter’s key points with the group.

- Strive for good supervisor-worker relationships; they generally result in good employee performance.
- Understand and develop strong self-concepts—in yourself and in your people.
- Practice listening to others effectively—an important element of communication.
- Practice giving clear instructions; don’t expect others to know what you mean.
- Learn to express anger in positive ways.
Show Transparency 8.32 and continue reviewing the chapter's key points.

- Talk about yourself—and encourage your people to do the same.
- Recognize problems and identify ownership. Deal with your own problems and help workers deal with theirs.
What You Have Learned

- What you need to work on to be a more effective supervisor
- Six ways to become a better communicator
- Areas where you may need to improve your communication skills
- How to help create a motivating work environment through effective communication

Show Transparency 8.33 and complete the chapter review by highlighting what the participants have learned.

- What you need to work on to be a more effective supervisor
- Six ways to become a better communicator
- Areas where you need to improve your communication skills
- How to help create a motivating work environment through effective communication