



BEING A HUMAN ... that's enough

Module 2 Communication

The Handbook for the Programme Participants

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Module 2 COMMUNICATION

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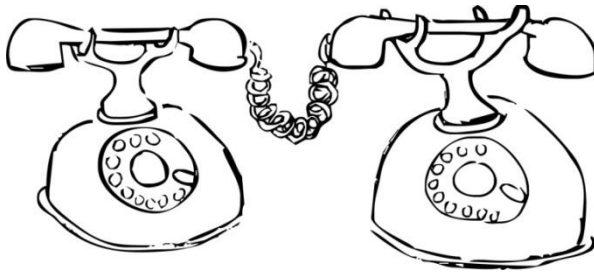
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*“The genius of communication is the ability to be both totally honest
and totally kind at the same time.”*

John Powell

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“What a man is like, such his speech is.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero

MODULE 2 COMMUNICATION

Each of us, consciously but unconsciously, too, sends different signals to other people. We send them different ways: with mimes, gestures, body posture, the tone of our voice, volume and speed of our speech, even with silence and of course with that what we say.

Certainly you have noticed that when we get well along with other people, we like talking to them, we often look at each other, we smile or touch gently with love. On the contrary, when we don't get well along with them, we speak (or we don't speak at all) and behave quite differently, although naturally – according to how we feel it. Our communication thus largely *reflects our relationships with other people.*

Through the communication we *create our mutual relationships* at the same – we get to know each other and get closer, we change information, meet our needs, etc.

This means that we've got in our hands, gestures, words, even in a silence an effective tool with which we can develop or change for the better our relationships with other people.

This module is going to pass us through the area of interpersonal communication, it offers many exercises and tasks which we can use in everyday life and practise developing our communication skills.

LESSON 2.1 Communication Process



There are several definitions of the communication. Narrower definitions consider only message transmission as the communication, the broader definitions, on which we will be based, consider the communication to be everything that happens in the contact of two or more people.

It means the communication is not only a transmission of messages but **whatever interaction between the people**. Within this interaction we send signals to the others and at the same time we receive signals from them. In the communication every person is sender and recipient, too, at the same time. For example, we receive non-verbal signals as a yawn or an absent-minded look from the other people. These ones we then interpret that “he is not interested in my speech”. According to the evaluation of perceptions, we continuously respond. We can change, for example the method of the communication or the topic, we can give word to another or finish our conversation.

Communication Process

Communication process has its sequence and logic and it is realized in these steps¹:

1. Conceptualizing of an idea which has some meaning for its originator (sender)

In our life everything is influenced by the way we use our mind. Maybe we don't feel like that sometimes but we think all day, every second, even when we sleep. Our brain continuously processes all stimuli to which we are exposed and it stores them into memory and unconsciousness. So we don't completely control our mental world and it often happens that the thoughts dominate us.

2. Encoding of the idea into signals – words, gestures, moves, symbols, etc.

An infinite stream of thoughts that constantly passes through our mind, changes gradually into our feelings, attitudes, words and actions. The way we encode our thoughts, words, gestures, moves or symbols we use, is influenced by our past experience and especially by people around us and from whom we have learnt to communicate unaware through the imitation.

3. Sending the encoded message

Each of us, consciously or unconsciously, sends different signals to the other people. We send them by all body: verbal (with words) but also non-verbal (with mimes, gestures, body posture, the tone of our voice, volume, speed of the speech, etc.).

4. Transmission of the message through the communication channels

Very important decision in the communication process is the choice of transmission medium, it is the form we send signals to another person. There are many communication channels in the people communication which are different and have their own specifics (e.g. personal, telephone, written, mediated, multimedia and so on).

5. Receiving, decoding and understanding of the message by the other person (recipient)

The other people receive our signals with their senses (the most often with eyes and ears) and process them. In the communication we choose (consciously or unconsciously) which information from our surroundings we receive (accept). At the same, the perception of each person is individual and affected by survived emotions, current mood, concentration, etc. In the processing of the signals we are affected also by the past experience with the other people. All these factors then influence how we evaluate the received signals and how we will respond to them.

Barriers to communication

In the communication process it often happens that many different external and internal impacts obstruct us to concentrate and to communicate effectively. There are many disturbances which result in reduced communication quality. We call them barriers to communication².

Between the so-called *practical barriers*, we consider environmental disturbances, e.g. opening a window to the street where cars drive and make excessive noise or the constantly ringing phone which obstructs to concentrate and so on.

Next types are *language barriers*. The person speaks too quickly, incomprehensibly, swallows the parts of the text, uses long sentences with many facts, etc.

Between the language barriers we consider also a limited ability to understand the meaning of used words (e.g. when we communicate in a foreign language which we can't speak very well). Another obstacle there are **barriers in the understanding**, when participants understand the communicated content different ways. The reason is the multi-meaning word content or a different view of the situation.

Another time there can be our just being experienced emotions, which are invoked either by the communicated content or the person we communicate with, the barriers to the communication. The emotions that accompany the communication can be negative – flurry, anger, hate, fury, irritation, boredom, or positive - hilarity, joy, enthusiasm, love. The emotions can be support at the start of the communication (we want to express accumulated joy or to relieve the anger) but if they take us over they may hinder the efficient reception or transmission of information. We talk about **overlapping attention and communication with emotions**.

Another type of the barriers are **intellectual barriers**, which are most often related to the language adaptation to the communication. These barriers happen in the situations when we use too professional language, foreign words, complicated statements, metaphors, inappropriate examples and so on.



To think about

The main purpose of the communication is mutual understanding. To mark our communication as effective, we have to understand each other.

To understand someone doesn't mean that we must agree with him/her. In our case the understanding means to understand the transmitted signals correctly, what the other person wants to tell us with them. To reach this we should be interested in what the others intend by their signals, to check if we understand their signals correctly and also to try to make our signals as clear and accurate as possible.

Lesson Summary

Communication is a whatever interaction between the people. Within the communication we send signals to the others and receive signals from them at the same time. The main purpose of the communication is mutual understanding.

Communication process is realized in these steps:

1. Conceptualizing of an idea which has some meaning for its originator (sender).
2. Encoding of the idea into signals – words, gestures, moves, symbols, etc.
3. Sending the encoded message.
4. Transmission of the message through the communication channels.
5. Receiving, decoding and understanding of the message by the other person (recipient).

Different disturbances, which result in reduced communication quality, are called the barriers to communication.



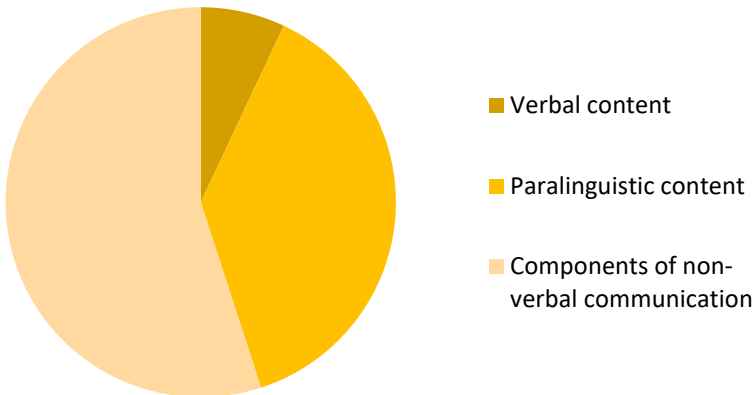
LESSON 2.2 Components of Communication



According to the type of transmitted signals we can divide the communication into **verbal communication**, so the communication using the words and **non-verbal communication**, where we transmit the signals using non-verbal means.

The non-verbal communication is older than verbal one, both in the personal history of man and in the entire history of mankind. The people in the past found out that non-verbal communication, which they had communicated by then, does not allow to express accurate all kind of information that they wanted to communicate. So they started to make speech and step by step they started to communicate using the words. Single words and simple expressions evolved into a language. The same, a child after the birth, uses mostly non-verbal ways of the communication and later he/she learns to speak and starts using the verbal communication.

Picture: Components of Communication



According to some experts, only 7% of the communication signals are based on verbal content. The rest is non-verbal expression – 38% are paralinguistic components (non-verbal communication related to verbal expression – rate, volume and fluency of the speech, voice pitch, voice colour, cotton words, silence) and 55% are other components of the non-verbal communication (mimes, gestures, haptics, proxemics and so on).

When we look at the percentage distribution of the individual components of communication, it could happen that the verbal component of the speech (our words) would be suppressed in terms of their importance. This wouldn't be good. It would also not be desirable if we resorted to speculative interpretation about each non-verbal expression. And so, although we have divided the communication into verbal and non-verbal, we've did it only for a better understanding of the communication process. These two components of communication go hand in hand and in practical life is needed to look at the communication individually (it cannot be unequivocally argued that individual non-verbal expressions have only one meaning) and to notice all the signals – verbal and non-verbal at the same time.



To think about

Do not lie – if you don't want to talk about anything, tell it clearly to the others that you won't talk about the topic. Deceit is a communication trap for both the deceived and the deceiver.

If you say the truth and what you really think and feel, you don't need to remember what you have ever told whom. It will always be enough to ask yourself again.

Lesson Summary

Communication we can divide into:

1. verbal (the communication using the words)
2. non-verbal (the communication using non-verbal means).

The non-verbal communication is older than verbal one, both in the personal history of man and in the entire history of mankind.

These two components of communication go hand in hand and in practical life is needed to notice all the signals - verbal and non-verbal at the same time.

LESSON 2.3 Verbal Communication



Our words have great power. Their power is almost incredible. It is basically a kind of energy. The words can unleash war but also bring peace. We can express our love to the others with words, but we can also hurt with them.

The words may be motivation for people to make wonderful works, but they can also destroy and disgust someone. The content of our words, time and the way we say them are important for the fact whether our words will lead to conflicts or to understanding. This power that we have when using the words, makes us responsible for the uttered words. Just as a thrown stone cannot be undone, the uttered word cannot be withdrawn.

Communication principles

Compliance with the following principles will contribute to our communication lead to mutual understanding³:

1. Express yourself clearly – This is such a way of the expression which is straight and uncomplicated, open, honest and in accordance with our inner beliefs and feelings. The main function of the verbal communication with the people is to make a lively connection between our inner and outer world. Listening to the other gives us a chance to learn something about his/her inner world. Unity between our inner and outer words is therefore very important for this.

2. Consider the content of your words – Before you say something, think if you will help others with your words or on the contrary you will weaken, insult, abase them. Our words have the power – they can heal but also put a hefty blow. We are responsible for the way we use this power. By thinking before saying our words we can avoid many misunderstandings and injuries and our communication will tend to better understanding.

3. Be concrete – In our communication we should avoid generalization because it is unaddressed, false, it misrepresents the communication and it often makes negative reactions at the other. For example: “You’re always late!”, “We all think that ...” and so on. When we talk about the concrete thing we should use the specific information and tend the conversation to the specific goal. E.g.: “I feel uncomfortable that I’ve had to wait for you long time today. I would be grateful if you were punctual next time.” etc.

4. Express yourself comprehensibly – Intelligibility has more meanings in the communication: 1. *Technical intelligibility*, where belong elements such as voice strength, expression, speech speed, fluency; 2. *Language intelligibility*, which is influenced by vocabulary and language proficiency. For example, we can have problems with the vocabulary in the communication in a foreign language. Also too professional language can be incomprehensible to a common man, so we should adapt to a person that we communicate with.

5. Express yourself directly – Exactness means that we don't contradict in our signals. For example, when a boy tells the girl to choose the place where they are going to go on the Friday evening, but he is annoying when she doesn't choose the option he would wish. We can avoid these situations if we are honest about facts what we really want, need, think and feel.

6. Make sure that the information is dosed correctly – The principle of right information dosing says about how much information we send to the others. Lack of information (their deliberately with holding) misleads the other, we get him into a state of tension, nervousness, anger. On the contrary, too much information is usually disturbing and confusing, the others are not able to receive them effectively, to process and to respond to them.

7. Choose an appropriate form – According to the character of given messages we choose also the appropriate form. Form sensitive is usually request for kindness, claiming, order or criticism. Command forms of communication can lead quickly to the result but they often disgust and demotivate the other people. However, they are justified in crisis situations, e.g. in the fire, when responsible people need to take command and the others should follow the orders. In the situation, when we want to motivate the others to cooperation, it is more effective to choose the forms which give the space for their expression and support the others to formulating one's own opinion.

8. Check the understanding – If we want to be sure that the others have understood us correctly, we should check it. We can do this continuously during the message transfer or at the end with the direct question whether the other has understood what we've told him/her. If we want to make sure that the other has understood right, we can let them to repeat the information.

Internal speech

Except for our external words which we say to the others and we hear from them, there also the words in our mind exist. These ones have a greater impact on our lives than the words which we present publicly. In fact, we all talk to ourselves. We talk to ourselves and so we try to interpret our experience. Our inner voice, inner words are key elements of our thinking, attitude and our expectation. This internal dialog often goes on without conscious influence when we use unbelievable 1300 to 1500 words per minute. Everything in our lives is influenced by the way we use our mind. Infinite stream of thoughts, which constantly flows our consciousness, gradually transforms into our feelings, attitudes, words and actions. It is therefore good to take responsibility also for our internal speech and thoughts that fill our mind.



To think about

Forgiveness is willingness to give up own right to annoyance (anger, resistance, hate ...), to give up negative assessment and oblivious behaviour to the man who has hurt me and the effort to grow in oneself and to him the attitude of generosity, undeserved mercy and even the love. And what does the forgiveness look like in practice?

When Thomas A. Edison was working at his “absurd” invention which he called “a shining onion”, his team was working with him for 24 hours a day. When he finally succeeded and made one of these shining onions and he had to introduce his invention at a solemn assembly of scientists, he gave it to a boy – assistant to carry it up the stairs to the room. The boy was walking carefully, step by step and he was paying all attention to his hands. He was afraid of that this invaluable product of his master’s effort would fall out of his hands. Probably you can guess what happened: when the assistant went quite up, he tripped and the big glass bank fell out of his hands in front of the whole assembly and broke. Such the first light bulb in the world fell out. All team had to start the work again to make another “shining onion”. When the tired design engineers finished their work, there were still one task - bring the valuable object up into the room. What do you think, who got the job? Edison entrust with the task the same boy whose hands the first bulb fell out.⁴

This is the real forgiveness.

Lesson summary

Our words have great power. This power that we have when using the words makes us responsible for what we've said.

Principles of effective communication leading to the mutual understanding:

1. Express yourself clearly
2. Consider the content of your words
3. Be concrete
4. Express yourself comprehensibly
5. Express yourself directly
6. Make sure that the information is dosed correctly
7. Choose the appropriate form
8. Check the understanding

Everything in our lives is influenced by the way we use our mind. It is therefore good to take responsibility also for our internal speech and thoughts that fill our mind.



LESSON 2.4 Non-verbal Communication



Non-verbal communication is without words. It works through the body posture and its movements, changes in facial expression, changes in the distance of the communicators and so on. It can complete the verbal speech, strengthen its effect, regulate it and under certain circumstances, it can fully substitute it. E.g. instead of our saying: “Yes, I agree.”, it is enough when we nod our head silently. Understanding the non-verbal communication of another person is possible within the context in that the communication takes place. And though the non-verbal expressions tell much, you must be cautious of all claims that it is possible to guess exactly from some non-verbal expressions what the other person thinks or feel or even what he/she is like.

Components of Non-verbal Communication

The most frequent and the most important components of the non-verbal communication include⁵:

1. **Mimes** – communication through the facial expression
2. **Gestures** – communication with the arms and the body
3. **Haptics** – communication by the touch
4. **Proxemics** – communication by the distance
5. **Posturology** – communication with the body position
6. **Kinesics** – communication with the movement
7. **Paralinguistics** – non-linguistic communication about the speech
8. **Territoriality** – communication by occupation of the territory
9. **Production** – communication using a look and environment adjustment

MIMES

With mimes we communicate through the facial expression. The means of the communication of the face are eyes, mouth, eyebrow, nose, forehead, chin, teeth, cheeks and lips. With mimes we use more parts of the face altogether, e.g. in a smile, the mouth, the eyes, the cheeks, sometimes also the teeth participate. The facial expression often informs about what the other person is experiencing, but also about his/her relationship to us. The facial expression mirrors surprise, fear, joy, sadness, peace, flurry, satisfaction, displeasure, interest, disinterest, etc.

Basic mime expressions are easy recognizable what we can see in using their graphic representation e.g. in the internet communication – so called emoticons. At this place it is good to mention as well visual contact which is important for quality and effective communication. If the other person is looking at us during the conversation, we suppose he/she is also listening to us and our conversation is important for him/her. If the other is not looking at us for various reasons, it can be disturbing. Optimal ratio of time to look in the face of another person within the communication is approx. 60%.

GESTURES

Gesture is the communication using the movements of the arms and the body that have great expressive purpose. They accompany and colour the verbal communication, sometimes they fully represent it, too. The most famous communication system based on the gestures is Sign Language. Sign Language is used not only by people with hearing impairment, we use it also when the verbal ways of the communication don't work (e.g. in the communication with the person whose language we cannot speak we help with the gestures), or if we cannot hear because of different barriers (e.g. common sign communication of drivers in cars). Gestures can be affected by our mood and situation we are in. For example, when we are angry we work more vigorously with gestures than when we are calm and relaxed. Exaggerated gestures are disturbing because they resemble pantomime. It can happen that instead of listening to us the other will start to entertain at us.

HAPTICS

Haptics is the non-verbal communication using the touches. The touch can be defined as whatever physical contact from stroking to punching. They can have different meanings which differ depending on the touch and what part of the body we touch. We distinguish these basic zones:

- *social, professional, courtesy zone* (arms, shoulders)
- *personal, friendly zone* (shoulders, hair, face)
- *intimate zone* (without limits).

The most commonly used touch is a handshake. The handshake is in our culture the part of the welcome and farewell ritual. The principle applies that we needn't to give the hand first, but if someone offers us the handshake, we should not refuse it. Refusing the hand means in our culture refusing the all person.

The element of the haptics is also physical violence (a hit, a slap, a battle) which has also some communication meaning but it is already a pathological pattern of communication.

PROXEMICS

Proxemics is the communication with the distance (how far or near you are, by approaching and delaying) between the communicators. How close we get to each other also express our attitude and relationship to the person.

There are four basic zones of the person in the proxemics:

- *Intimate* (up to 60 cm from a person)
- *Personal* (from 60 cm up to 120 cm)
- *Social* (from 120 cm up to 2 m)
- *Public* (the distance over 2 m)

Intimate and personal zones are reserved for the people whose proximity is pleasant to us, we trust them, they do not threaten us and we have emotionally positive relationships with them. If we are angry with a friend, for example, we do not want him to be in our intimate zone. In the social zone we communicate with the others at a safe distance. It is typical for work conversation or the communication with the less known people. In the public zone there are the people whom we are not in a social contact with. If we are threatened, we extend our public zone.

The distances given are for reference only. They are often affected by many factors as temperament, nationality, environmental impacts, etc.

Except for the *horizontal proxemics* described above, we know also *vertical proxemics* based on the difference in the “height” of the communicators.

Unbalanced vertical communication is in the case when one communicating person is standing and the other one is sitting. Optimal vertical communication is based on the fact that the eyes of the communicating people are approximately at the same height – e.g. the both talking persons are sitting or standing.

POSTUROLOGY

Posturology is the non-verbal communication with the body position which we take during the communication – the way we stand, sit, lie and so on, it tells a lot about us. With our body position we express our current condition (for example exhaustion, joy, depression), but also the relationship with the other person or the interest in the communicated content.

Within the posturology we distinguish the positions:

Casual position – the body is relaxed, it signalizes either our relaxed condition or on the contrary distance, contempt, disgrace of the another.

Open position – The legs are freely put next to each other, we do not cross them while sitting, the arms are freely next to the body. The open position signalizes preparedness to receive the information from the other and readiness to cooperation.

Semi-closed position – This is the defensive position which we use especially in discomfort. It is characteristic with crossed legs or arms. Crossed hands on our chest protect our hearts and the soft parts of the abdomen (the areas that are important for the individual survival), crossed legs protect genitals (important areas for the survival of the human race). This position is often waiting and if we make sure there is no danger, we tend to come back to more open positions.

Closed position – Crossed hands and legs represent completely closed position, the muscles are in tense, the body is ready to respond. Closed position is typical for the situation which are unknown for us, when we are in defence and we do not allow the communication of another person.

Position “skein” – The head is inclined and back is bent, the legs are joined, all body is curled up into a skein. The position “skein” occurs in the situations when we do not feel comfortable (e.g. at the dentist, in the court, at the police station, etc.), this position signalizes uncertainty, anxiety, fear and risk.

KINESICS

Kinesics is the communication using the movements which have not the meanings of the gestures. The body still send some signals and they are often unawares, spontaneous movements. We usually get rid of the muscle or mental tension. It most often manifests by uncontrolled hand movements (playing with a pencil, finger movements, scratching, knocking), leg movements (stamping, nodding the foot), or body movements (wagging, wagging on the chair, often changing of the body position). Much information we can read from our walking (slow, resolute, with hoppers, etc.).

PARALINGUISTIC

Paralinguistic goes with the spoken word but it is not the spoken word. Paralinguistic is not only one phenomenon but it consists of several separate factors such as the rate, the volume and the fluency of the speech, the voice pitch and colour, the cotton words, the silence.

It is difficult to receive too fast or too slow speech. Too fast pace makes the communication obscure and makes another person tired. On the contrary, too slow pace dulls the listener's attention.

Intensity, volume of the speech and their changing according to the content can help to prevent monotony. In tense situation the intensity of the voice is getting higher and it can become even the shouting. The raised voice can weaken or irritate another person.

The important factor of the spoken word is also the colour of the voice. We often give the real meaning to the word even with the colour of the voice. The same word or phrase can be said more ways so that it changes its original meaning.

To the paralinguistic there also so called cotton words belong (e.g. well, oh, uh and so on) which have no content meaning in the context of the verbal speech, we consider them for the disturbing bad habit.

Also the quality of our expression belongs to the paralinguistic. Our speech should be factual, understandable and should stick to the topic. On the contrary, as inferior we consider the speech that is inaccurate, lengthy and indefinite, long lasting with low content.

We use the silence during the verbal expression that can mean expectation, challenge, request for the attention, the opportunity to think for the listener and so on. So the silence has also the communication value and the content meaning and it is important to integrate it with another non-verbal expressions and to define it more precisely.

TERRITORIALITY

In general, we tend to occupy some territory, consider it for ours and also we want to decide who can come into our territory (e.g. our chair and desk in the classroom, or the desk at work, and so on). Space occupation and entering foreign space have the communication meaning which also influences the course and style of the communication.

The occupied territory means for the person the feeling of security and safety so the long staying in the environment without own territory brings tense, frustration and anger.

It is important to realize that the man coming into the foreign territory can feel anxiety from the foreign environment. Generally, we can say that we usually choose more dominant communication strategy in own territory, in the partner's territory a little more submissive respectively more defensive.

PRODUCTION

Production is the communication using the adjust of the appearance, clothes or the environment we live in. Into this part of the non-verbal communication we can include the communication by an action, too.

Our appearance mirrors and also act backwards our opinion about ourselves and affect our behaviour, too. Our hair, a hairstyle, a figure, purity, neatness or neglect – those all are the signals with which we present our “life philosophy”, our life style, priorities and some aesthetic message and so on, to our surroundings. Specific appearance modification can place us to some formal or informal group of people (for example, the uniform says about belonging to some profession, some clothes can express belonging to some musical style – hip hop, rock, etc.). Many times small details, cleanliness of clothes, nice body fragrance, nice nails and so on, give a stronger impression than costly and fashionable clothing.

Next source of information about us are the things that we are surrounded by (e.g. our room equipment while we can affect it), the books we read, the music we listen to, but our interests and hobbies, too. Our creations also have an important informative value– poems, prose, paintings, musical production and specific craft work, etc. All that information is heavily involved in creating an image of us.

It is more difficult to control the non-verbal communication by will and to influence it by a reason. The part of it goes on without our consciousness, comes inadvertently and we cannot control it. Through it therefore, we can better express emotions, experiences and the relationships to the other persons.



To think about

Imagine the world as a big mirror. If you frown at it, the world will frown at you, too. But if you smile at it, the smiles will come back to you.

The smile is a part of the non-verbal communication of the people. It also has a beneficial effect on the health, it is free, you needn't to pay for it nor to store it and even if you give it all, you will have much more. 😊

Lesson summary

Non-verbal communication can complete the verbal speech, strengthen its effect, regulate it and under certain circumstances, it can fully substitute it. Non-verbal communication is without words.

The components of the non-verbal communication include:

1. Mimes – communication through the facial expression
2. Gesture – communication with the arms and the body
3. Haptics – communication by the touch
4. Proxemics – communication by the distance
5. Posturology – communication with the body position
6. Kinesics – communication with the movement
7. Paralinguistic – non-linguistic communication about the speech
8. Territoriality – communication by occupation of the territory
9. Production – communication using a look and environment adjustment

It is more difficult to control the non-verbal communication by will and to influence it by a reason, through it therefore, we can better express emotions, experiences and the relationships to the other persons.

LESSON 2.5 Transmission of Communication signals



Within the signals we send and receive in the communication with the others we distinguish two levels – factual and relational⁶.

Factual level – With the factual (with content) signals we inform another person about what we want to say. We send the factual signals with some codified sign system (words, concepts, but also Morse code, finger characters, etc.). The factual aspect of the message specifically describes what we are communicating about. It focuses on the facts, it should be free from hints and interpretations. Example: “It is half past five, you are 30 minutes late.”

Relational level – With the relational communication we send signals about, *what we think about the other people, how we receive them and what attitude or relationship we have to them*. Example: “You should come a half an hour ago, but as usually, you’re late today.” Within the relational aspect of the message we show the others, *what we think about our relationship*. Example: “According to our agreement you had to be here a half an hour ago, but you have always something more important than the things we agreed.” Next aspect of the sent signal is also *the presentation of our relationship to ourselves*. Example: “Nobody looks after me anymore, I could use this half an hour, that I’ve been waiting here, more effective!”

The relational communication, what relationship the other has with us, how he/she behaves to us (if he/she smiles or is distant, if he/she is helpful or rather negative), is always more important for us than the factual communication, the facts the other inform us concretely. This is related with our need to be safe. Therefore, in the beginning of the communication we focus more to the relational signals and then we move the attention at the factual ones.

However, it can happen that we come into our communication out of tune because of previous events, but the other can explain it as a negative reaction at his person. The same, the other can survive a difficult time when he/she is more sensitive to relational signals and also neutral or factual signals he/she can receive as degrading or offensive. There exist several reasons for possible misunderstanding.

For that it is important, if we want to understand together, to inform each other about what is going on in us, what we feel, how the others affect us. If we don't do it, there will stay a big space for various distortions and guesses in our communication. And such communication then leads to the misunderstandings and conflicts.

Disturbing Signals

It often happens that during the communication another person starts sending the relational signals which are disturbing (for example, he/she starts to use bad language or to shout at us, to crash us, to send up, to deny our vision of the world, etc.). Then we stop focusing on what the other is saying in the content, but the tension starts to grow in us. We can respond to similar situation in these ways⁷:

1. To ignore – We stay at the factual communication and ignore the disturbing relational signals. Everybody can ignore the relational attacks, but each to a different degree. It depends on our personal dispositions, temperament, fatigue, self-confidence, actual physical and mental well-being, but also on the fact how much is the topic of the conversation important for us, what relationship we are in with the person, and so on.

2. To fight, to have a conflict – We stop focusing on the factual content of the conversation and we respond by defence or a counterattack (often the defence and the attack simultaneously). We can't keep in the factual level and start to mix the relational and factual signals together. Although outward it may look that we are communicating about the given "thing", actually we are clearing the relationships using "the thing". The effectiveness of such communication then goes to zero.

3. To separate the factual and the relational communication transparently – This way says about the possibility what we can do if we don't want to ignore the relational attacks, but we don't want to defend nor fight, too. In the situation when the relational signals of the other are disturbing us we can stop the communication in the factual level transparently (clearly) and to discuss our relationships. When we explain the relationship and make "the relational peace", we can come back to the factual communication. This conscious switching of the attention from the factual to relational signals allows us so called **feedback** – the man's response to the communication signals.



To think about

“The way you are like (what you do) is screaming so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying!”

Slovak proverb

Lesson Summary

We distinguish two levels of the communication – factual and relational. With the factual (content) signals we inform the others about what we want to say. With the relational communication we send signals about, what we think about the other people, how we receive them and what attitude or relationship we have to them, what we think about our relationship, but also we present our relationship to ourselves.

The relative communication is always more important than the factual communication for us.

It happens that during the communication another person starts sending the relational signals which are disturbing (for example, he/she starts to use bad language or to shout at us, to crash us, to send up, etc.). We can respond to this situation in these ways:

1. To ignore
2. To fight, have a conflict
3. To separate the factual and the relational communication transparently.

LESSON 2.6 Receiving Communication Signals



When we talk about the communication we usually link it with the art of speaking. However, listening is the integral part of the communication process because we would talk uselessly if nobody listens to us.

Receiving the communication signals at the same, includes also perception of the non-verbal communication of another person, this makes with the spoken word together the complex of the communicated signals.

Active Listening Principles

In terms of the effective communication it is good to learn and use the active listening principles.

1. Show your interest – You can show your interest with the appropriate eye contact, nodding your head, leaning towards the other, using different interjections, e.g. “uhmm, yeah”, using short encouraging notes and words such as “Really?”, “Sure.”, “oh, yes.”, “and then?”, or with repeating something what was said, which we assure another person that we are listening to him/her with the interest. It is difficult to encourage someone to talk, by looking through the window, typing on computer, going out the room and next entering the room, or similar disturbing demonstrations. When we show the interest to another person, actually we say that his/her “story” is important for us and it is worth saying. This interest allows us to enter the inner world of another person for a while and to see the things from his/her point of view.

2. Be attentive and empathetic – Being attentive and empathetic means to notice what is going on in another person. Dolphins have the ability which is called echolocation, thanks to their very precise acoustic sense they can feel immediately physical health or mental state of the other – just by being near them. We try to be similar sensitive to the others in active listening. Our attention and empathy can help us to learn something more about the world of another person, to feel his emotional mood and to understand better our mutual reactions.

3. Do not judge – In active listening we accept the others as they are, with their opinions, attitudes. This acceptance makes another person possible to be himself/herself, with that we make the space for the speech freedom and ultimately also the space for the personal welcome of the other person. We do not have to agree with another person, the acceptance tells rather about the respect for the others. We can have the different opinion, attitude, but if we accept the others, we do not judge them and receive them as they are.

4. Consider your answer – The listening process is completed with an answer from which it should be clear that we understand another person. In the interpersonal relationships there are only few situations that can give us so much energy such as the one when someone hears us and understand. Our answers are a sign if we came into the world of the people who we listen to or the other way.

The active listening gives the chance to share the inner world for the other. Our task in the active listening is to accompany and encourage the other. When we accompany someone, we are not in his way, do not impose our own views on him, do not judge him/her nor make him/her to listen our opinion. If the other talks, we are simply there as his/her companion, as the person who is interested in the listening what he/she is talking.

Not listening to

Even though our communication without listening does not full-fill its meaning to that, not listening to is very common phenomenon in the communication process. A lot of researches from the communication field show it, too, they say that up to 75 % of verbal communication people ignore, forget or misunderstand. And if we don't listen to, we probably do not respond appropriately.

We know two kinds of not listening to, **public and hidden**. In the public not listening to, we show clearly that we are not interested in the sent signals or we don't receive them for the various reasons. The other registers this disinterest and either stops the communication or tries to engage us to listen. The hidden not listening to is a communication trap. On the outside we appear to listen, we can pretend interest about the communicated content, but really we don't listen to and don't receive the information at all. The reason of our not listening to can be our interest in something else, uninteresting topic, or listening only for decency.



To think about

Little Momo could listen like no one else. She could listen so that the stupid people were suddenly coming up with wise thoughts. But not therefore that she would tell or ask something which brought these people to such thoughts, no, she was only sitting there and listening – with the greatest attention and participation. She was looking at the man with her big dark eyes and he felt such thoughts emerging about which he did not even know that were sleeping in his mind.

She could listen so well that helpless and indecisive people suddenly knew exactly what they wanted. And shy people felt at once free and courageous. Unhappy and oppressed people started to trust themselves and to feel happy. If someone was thinking that his life was really doubtful and insignificant and he was only one from the millions – the man who didn't care at all and could be changed like the broken jug – if that man went and talked all little Momo, for mysterious reasons it was clear to him while talking that he was wrong in principle. That the man like he is only one among all people and therefore he is important for the world by his own way. So Momo could listen.⁸

We have two ears and only one mouth. However, many people behave like this was contrariwise. It is up to you, now, how you behave.

Lesson summary

Listening is the integral part of the communication process.

Active listening principles:

1. Show your interest
2. Be attentive and empathetic
3. Do not judge
4. Consider your answer

The active listening gives the other the chance to share the inner world. Our task in the active listening is to accompany and encourage the other person, while we are not in his way, do not impose our own views on him, do not judge him/her nor make him/her to listen our opinion.

LESSON 2.7 Communication Styles



Imagine that you are sitting on a plane before the start. A melodic voice is heard from the speaker: *“Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am the captain of the plane, John Eagle. Welcome on board of the plane Boeing 737 of Air Slovakia.*

In a while our flight on the route Bratislava – Paris will start.”

Probably it would surprise you if the captain went on with the information about his family, hobbies, and about his birthday next week. It wouldn't be right if he added the story about the conflict with the colleague that he had last month. It is just wrong in this situation, even unacceptable.

The same it is necessary to consider the content and a style of the communication in a sitting with friends in the candy store, in the communication with teachers at school or with the boss at work. And these situations will be far also from the vocabulary and the communication style of whispering people in love or from the shouting in the pub.

Communication styles

In general, we distinguish **five basic communication styles**⁹ which we use in everyday as well as in exceptional contacts with the other people. They are:

1. Conventional communication style – There are situations when we change greetings, some common phrases, compliments or sentences, e.g. about the weather (it is always some☺). Conventional communication style can change into the conversational one, but also we can finish it and goes own way.

Conventional style of the communication expects some distance between the people, so it is used usually by people who are not close much and their meeting are not full of emotions or mutual emotional expressions. It helps to the conventional communication without the problems, if we know the good manners, because it avoids embarrassment when everyone knows what and when to say.

2. Conversational communication style – There are the situations when we change the interesting information, news, ideas or opinions, whose practical usefulness is at that moment negligible. The goal of the conversational communication is amusement, chat, relationship strengthening and the sense of belonging because we spend time together.

The important sign of this communication is balanced relationship (between the known, friends, classmates, siblings, etc.) and accompanying pleasant feelings. But if it happens that someone involved don't stay at the balanced position with the others, and moves up and starts to preach, teach or lead a long-lived monologue – the conversation will stop or finish at all and the conversational style will end.

3. Operative communication style – This style is the best for the situations where the relationship hierarchy, a role definition, positions, competences (a parent – a child, a teacher – a pupil, a boss – an employee, etc.) are clear. The main goals of this style are to make something, to do, to arrange or to equip something. The communication is usually clear, brief, sometimes stark, but always correct and polite. There the contacts should be made with prevalence at work, between officials and citizens, traders and customers. The most schematic operative communication style is, for example, in the army, at police or at fire station, where the orders and commands are definite, nobody discuss them and everybody knows who, when and how has to order and who has to follow the orders.

4. Negotiating communication style – This style belongs everywhere when participating sides are in the balanced power position and they need or want to do or to negotiate something in common. It is only negotiated when it is necessary to decide but each side has the different interests, ideas, wishes, and the one exclude another. The negotiation is the significant, very difficult and quite rare communication skill which is good to master. The results of the effective negotiation are solutions of conflict situations from which all participating sides can benefit. That is because the principles of the effective negotiating are based on the respect of the other people and the common result is negotiated according to rational reasons and common interests of participating sides.

5. Private (intimate) communication style – So called private communication style is different from the other styles because it is the mean of satisfaction of the deepest human desires and needs. Confidential interview we need during important life changes, especially when we do not know what to do next, in what direction, when we have to decide in a serious situation or when we survive the personal or relational crisis, if we have some problem, doubts about ourselves, etc.

The most important feature of the private communication style is our emotion. Balance or imbalance of the relationship fades into the background and it becomes important the distance between the people – mental and spatial.

Confidential Interview

We long for intimacy and at the same time we are afraid of it. When I open myself to another person and I sincerely entrust him/her with my deepest concerns, needs, frustrations, desires or hopes, I uncover my soul and become easy vulnerable. Of course, we do not communicate intimate with anybody for wait, we do it with the people who are worthy of our trust and openness. The intimacy expects and requires with the trust also the empathy – the art of empathizing with another, acceptance – receiving of the other as he/she is and the truth – not play, not pretend anything.

It can happen that our sorrow, pain or happiness overloads us and the need of proximity and society of another person prevails over caution and we open in the conversation to someone who is not worth it. It is an indescribable crime against humanity if someone misuses this trust.



To think about

The friendship is a big gift. It is the most wonderful, the most difficult, the riskiest and the most tender business of the life. Try to be a good friend.

Lesson summary

In the communication with the others we use different communication styles. In generally we distinguish five basic communication styles:

1. Conventional communication style
2. Conversational communication style
3. Operative communication style
4. Negotiating communication style
5. Private (intimate) communication style

LESSON 2.8 Feedback



If we say something to the others we can say one sentence after another and lead our own monologue. Or we can try for the real dialogue and let the space for the reaction of another person. The reaction of the other person to our communication signals is

called the feedback.

The feedback is the tool with which we know how we affect the others and it allows us to tell the others how they affect us. There are principles how to give the feedback and also how to receive it in order to benefit from the feedback and not to hurt each other¹⁰.

Principles of giving feedback:

- *Concreteness*
- *Neutrality*
- *Timeliness*
- *Usefulness*
- *Sensibility*
- *Balance*

Principles of receiving feedback:

- *Hear*
- *Do not disturb*
- *Think*
- *Understand*

When giving the feedback, it is good:

Concreteness

When giving the feedback we try to give the people concrete information. We avoid fogging, unfinished thoughts, uncertainties, generalization. We do not rely on clairvoyance of the other, so that he/she will think out what we want to tell him/her.

Neutrality

We form the feedback so that we tell the other how we have received him/her, how his/her behaviour has affected us, how we have felt, without valuation of his/her behaviour if it was good or bad, right or wrong and so on. With giving the feedback it is important that the one who gives it speaks for himself/herself. "I think ...", "It affected me ...", "I felt ...".

Timeliness

We give the feedback as soon as possible after the situation we want to respond to. The feedback after greater time gap has the different function. Only in the unique situation we can delay giving the feedback for short time, especially if there are not suitable conditions for (e.g. strong emotions would affect the process of giving the feedback or another person is not prepared for it or he/she doesn't want to hear it).

Usefulness

The feedback helps the person to learn how his/her behaviour influence the others, what it activates in them and what is good for their relationship. The aim of the feedback is not to weaken, offend, insult or destroy the other. Before the feedback giving we must think how it can be useful for another person.

Sensibility

To not hurt the others but help them with the feedback, we formulate it very sensitively. The specific description of his/her behaviour we want to respond to, plus the specific description of what it activates in us, make with positive suggestion of next behaviour the conditions to meet each other. So our communication will be about the understanding and not about misunderstandings and conflicts.

Balance

Our feedback we give also to the behaviour which we feel as positive in order to the others see us as the people who still criticize. If we give the feedback also to the positive behaviour, our feedback will be received better.

When receiving the feedback, it is good:

Hear

When someone gives us the feedback, it is the opportunity to learn how our behaviour affect the others. We do not dispute whether the feedback is right or not. The feedback is the offer. After listening it we don't have to agree with it, because the different people see the different situation in different ways.

Do not disturb

When receiving the feedback, we tend to jump into the speech, to defend, explain, excuse, etc. However, the most useful it is to hear the feedback till the end without disturbing and to think what is the feedback about and why the other sees us in this way.

Think

We choose the information that we consider for useful and important from the feedback. And although we do not identify with the feedback, it says about how the concrete person sees us in this concrete situation. So we can think about the feedback from the other people and use it for our better behaviour in the different situations.

Understand

Sometimes it happens that we do not understand some things in the feedback. Then, instead of own interpretations, we ask the other person for the explaining things that are not clear for us or we do not understand them.

Positive and negative feedback

With the positive feedback we can strengthen some behaviour at another person– e.g. “It pleased me that you have found time for me and helped me with the maths.” With the negative feedback we can try to correct the other’s behaviour to us – e.g. “I’m sorry that you didn’t stand up for me when they scoffed at me.”

To be the feedback effective it should have as exact as it can and neutral description of the behaviour that we want to respond and the name what this behaviour activates in us. They are the most often our emotions and feelings. Giving the feedback is also good for the future – to describe the behaviour which is worthy and it is good to add the description of the emotion that the behaviour activated in us – e.g. “I will be glad if you change your shoes next without the warning.”



To think about

The real story from the US President Abraham Lincoln's life says how he wanted to please some officer once and so he signed him the command to the regiment moving.

Commander-in-Chief of the Army Stanton was sure that the president made a big mistake and so he refused to fulfil the order. And also he said: "Lincoln is crazy! "

When Lincoln heard it, he said: "If Stanton told I'm crazy, then I am crazy, because he is almost always right. I think I will go through it and deal with it." And so he did. The famous president didn't do any abasing step to his subordinate nor any restrictive reaction but vice versa. Commander Stanton even persuaded him that the command was really wrong and Lincoln immediately abolished it. Everyone knew that the part of Lincoln's greatness was also in the fact that he could receive the criticism benevolently.¹¹

Lesson summary

The feedback is the tool with which we know how we affect the others and it allows us to tell the others how they affect us. There are these principles *forgiving the feedback*:

- Concreteness
- Neutrality
- Timeliness
- Usefulness
- Sensibility
- Balance

There are these principles for *receiving the feedback*:

- Hear
- Do not disturb
- Think
- Understand

MODULE 2 SUMMARY

The word communication comes from the Latin word *communicāre* and it means “to make something common, to share, connect, confide”.

The communication is very important for our lives. It helps to build relationships which make our lives to be full-featured.

The main goal of the communication is the mutual understanding. For understanding to happen it is necessary to consider the words we say to the others. The same important part of the communication is the art of listening to. Active listening is the expression of the real interest in the other people.

However, we often make in our lives “gaffe” in the relationships – we say or do something what can touch the other or to hurt him/her. And as physical injuries also the “soul injuries” need to be healed. The features of the good relationships are willingness to apologize, to forgive, to reconcile. Because as the words can hurt so they can heal, too.

The communication is the area in our life in which is necessary to work for whole life. The reward for this work on ourselves is the personal development, fulfilling relationships and happy life.



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