

The Power of You

By Lee Ann Szelog, President, Simply Put, LLC | email: lee@simplyputllc.com | www.simplyputllc.com | www.facebook.com/simplyputllc | 2018 Fall Training School Speaker

In this day and age we have more ways to communicate, yet our communication seems weaker. We have more ways to connect, yet we seem more disconnected.

Studies indicate the most important skill... the most powerful skill in the workplace today is communication.

I advocate the most vital skill in our personal lives is also communication. Enhancing our communication skills can have a significant impact on our life, personally and professionally, resulting in better relationships, less misunderstandings, greater influence, contentment and more. Regardless of whether we are communicating in-person, via phone, email, letter, or social media, the way in which we communicate impacts every aspect of our life and every person who hears our messages. **We are still humans who crave an emotional connection with others.** The question to ask yourself each time you communicate is **do you want to communicate productively or destructively?**

We underestimate the power we have to enhance our communication. The first step in maximizing your communication is understanding the power of the **Platinum Rule**.

Most people remember learning The Golden Rule when we were growing up. Undoubtedly, your parents and teachers reinforced this rule: "Do Unto Others as You Would Have Done Unto You." In other words, treat others the way you want to be treated. This is a great rule that served us well in our formative years.

We now know an even more powerful rule, The Platinum Rule, by Tony Alessandra. This rule suggests that we "Do Unto Others as They Would Have Done Unto Them." **In simpler terms, treat other the way that they want to be treated.**

How do we know how people want to be treated? Based on a number of factors (personalities, values, upbringing, etc.), we all have a preferred way of communicating, and we have strengths and opportunities as communicators. Some people prefer a straight forward approach to communication, while others prefer to consider facts and options. Others prefer to share emotions while some enjoy sharing stories and experiences.

To know how people want to be treated, we need to first understand communication styles, and identify our primary style. Once we become adults we typically have one of four dominant communication styles. The four styles below outline typical behaviors as strengths and opportunities associated with each style. You may not exhibit every behavior, but one style should sound more like you than

the others. Keep in mind the styles are not meant to label anyone, and no style is better than another. These styles are simply a tool to help us understand our strengths and opportunities, so we can maximize the power we have to communicate effectively.

Identifying Your Communication Style

DIRECT

Strengths: Efficient, Concise, In control of their lives, Strong leader, Risk taker

Opportunities: Listen more, Practice patience, Slow down

DYNAMIC

Strengths: Good consensus builder, Contagious positive energy, Inspiring, Uplifting, Creative

Opportunities: Pay attention to details, Better time management, Control enthusiasm

COMPETENT

Strengths: Thorough, Exceptional attention to detail, Good planner and problem-solver, Well-organized

Opportunities: Control need for detail and analysis, Express more emotions, Take more risk

THOUGHTFUL

Strengths: Value relationships, Cares about others' feelings, Good listener, Builds trust, Good team member

Opportunities: Offer opinions and ideas, Stand ground, Control emotions

Now that you have an overview of the 4 styles, and have hopefully identified what your dominant style is, how do you know how others want to be treated?

How to Determine Others' Styles

Through the power of your observation, you can quickly determine, with a high degree of certainty, the communi-

cation styles of others by simply watching body language and listening to tone. Body language makes up 55% of our communication in person, while tone, the way in which we say our words, accounts for 38%. Our words contribute 7%. This is why the power of observing body language and listening to tone can serve as good indicators of someone's communication style.

Whether you are providing service to a customer, interacting with a community member, shopping or dining as a customer yourself, the power of observation can help you adapt and build rapport with the other person, resulting in better interactions, improved relationships and greater self-satisfaction.

Clues to Help You Identify Styles

DIRECT: Fast Pace, Bold, Driven, Speaks quickly

DYNAMIC: Excited, Enthused, Outgoing, Talkative

COMPETENT: Methodical, Tidy, Avoids touching, Organized

THOUGHTFUL: Gentle, Likes to hug, Relaxed pace, Listens

Adapting Your Communication Style

To practice the Platinum Rule, here are techniques to adapt to the other styles:

Communicating with a DIRECT

Get to the point	Don't waste time
Ask questions	Speak quickly
Keep to the allotted timeframe	

Communicating with a DYNAMIC

Brainstorm	Socialize to develop rapport
Ask questions and allow them to talk	Share a story
Show energy or enthusiasm	

Communicating with a COMPETENT

Give details	Be organized
Keep to the facts	Provide data
Allow time for analysis	

Communicating with a THOUGHTFUL

Be supportive	Share emotions
Be patient	Have an easy-going pace
Listen to a Promoter	

Understanding and employing the **Platinum Rule** - in all walks of your life - can have a very positive (even profound) impact on your life and the lives of those around you. If you treat others the way **they** want to be treated, you will strengthen your relationships with others and enhance your overall success and happiness in life.

Work to understand the strengths and limitations of your own style, read others' styles, and then "treat others the way they want to be treated" in order to enhance your relationships!

Your tone and body language are most apparent in face-to-face conversations, but remember body language is absorbed into your tone during phone conversations as well as into your written words. Your ability to master the use of your words, tone and body language has a direct impact on your relationships, career success, goal achievement and your

overall happiness. **What's in it for you? When you maximize the power of your communication you have the power to:**

- Increase your influence and prestige.
- Make others like and respect you.
- Develop expertise to tackle difficult and complex situations.
- Make and retain friends.
- Make others around you cheerful.
- Become an effective leader.
- Become enthusiastic and young at heart.

You have the power, the tools and the knowledge, so how will you maximize your skills to enhance relationships, success and happiness? Who do you want to positively impact?

Here are 2 goals to consider:

1. Strive every day to be a great employee, husband, wife, mother, father, daughter, son, coach, friend, etc. You have the power to be great in every relationship. By doing so, **you'll make a difference in your life and in the lives of those most important to you.**

2. **Strive to leave everyone you encounter in a better place.** In any interaction with others you have the choice to leave people in one of 3 places: 1) In a better place, 2) In a worse place, and 3) Exactly the same place. You have the power by using these simple techniques:

- Smile (physically or through your voice).
- Use their names!
- Show an interest in them personally.
- Compliment them or their work, place, etc.
- Offer something unexpected.
- Tell them you were glad to have met them, etc.
- Don't make them feel like an interruption!
- Use the **Platinum Rule** - adapt to their style.

In closing, don't just communicate... don't just connect. **Communicate and connect meaningfully and purposefully.** Communicate productively, not destructively.

Words of Inspiration

- Your behavior has the **power** to change someone's life.
- There is **power** in the constant flow of change.
- Good morning! Simple yet **powerful** words to greet everyone to help them embrace and enjoy today!
- Your energy has the **power** to energize others.
- Selfless acts are life's most treasured gifts that have the **power** to help people, situations and life itself.
- Like the sun, we have the **power** to provide energy and warmth.
- Your words, your actions, your gestures, your tone; every thing about you has the **power** to change someone's life, as well as your own.
- You have the **power** to engage or disengage people today. What will you choose to do?
- We all have the **power** to make a difference; what difference will you make today?
- And remember, enjoy today while you have today to enjoy. You have the **power** to truly make a difference in the lives of so many, including your own.