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MANAGEMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES

Unfortunately, Assertive Communication is uncommon. There are three common styles communicators use, and each breaks the healthy connection between you, your customers and your staff.



2 PASSIVE COMMUNICATION

Passive Communication is driven by the desire to avoid conflict and disapproval and this constantly puts you in a position of weakness. You respond or act in a way that does not meet your needs such as saying "yes" to a request when you want to say "no" or staying silent when you have an opinion. You strive to please others but neglect your own needs. You are vulnerable to manipulation because you would rather avoid disapproval than risk rocking the boat.

It shows up like this:

- I lose, you win
- I am afraid of conflict and disapproval and avoid it by being nice
- I allow others to take advantage of me due to my desire to please
- I allow others to manipulate me
- I am unwilling to assert myself
- I am unable to express my feelings, needs, wants or opinions
- I speak softly or apologetically
- I blame others and my circumstances for my unhappiness

Passive Communicators will:

- Feel resentful because their needs are not being met
- Feel anxious, stuck and/or hopeless
- Feel disconnected from others because real issues are never addressed
- Have their personal growth impeded because of avoidance behaviors

3 AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

Aggressive Communication is a style in which you express your feelings and opinions in a way that intrudes upon the rights and opinions of others. You believe you are entitled to have things done your way, because you are right, and others needs and opinions, are wrong and less important. Your intention is to manipulate and control others behavior from a position of power.

It shows up like this:

- I win, you lose
- I like to be right
- I have poor listening skills
- I'm loud, demanding and overbearing
- I frequently interrupt
- I dominate meetings and conversations
- I take advantage of others
- I try to control others

Aggressive Communicators will:

- Intimidate and generate fear in others
- Reach their goals but hurt others in the process
- Become alienated from others
- Have their personal growth impeded due to an unwillingness to own their issues



4 PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

Passive-Aggressive Communication is a deliberate but masked way of expressing feelings of anger, disappointment, resentment or rejection. You come from a position of weakness because you are unwilling to address your problems head on and you express yourself indirectly, subtly, and behind the scenes. You are passive-aggressive because you feel powerless, stuck, and resentful. In other words, you feel incapable of, or unwilling to deal directly with the object of your resentment. Instead, you express your anger by subtly undermining the people you resent.

It shows up like this:

- I lose, you lose
- I express negative feelings in an indirect or masked way
- I talk behind peoples back and work hard to get others on my side
- I use facial expressions that don't match how I feel such as smiling when I'm angry
- I send negative, indirect messages using non-verbal body language
- I use sarcasm or cynicism to get my point across
- I appear cooperative while purposely doing things to stall, annoy and disrupt
- I use subtle sabotage to get even

Passive-Aggressive Communicators will:

- Remain stuck in a position of powerlessness
- Feel resentment while real issues never get addressed
- Become alienated from those around them
- Hide behind indirect action which impedes their personal growth



GREAT LEADERS UNDERSTAND THAT COMMUNICATION IS A BRIDGE.

It is how they connect with their people. Great leaders have an abundant communication toolkit and they pay attention to choosing each tool wisely. Not only that, they realize that tools work best when they are honed and sharpened. Is a hammer your favorite tool? Do you tend to choose a screwdriver? Or perhaps you use a small hammer when no one is looking. When you open your communication toolkit, what do you see?

If this blog caught your attention and you want to learn more, stay tuned for my upcoming podcasts where we will go deeper and wider with communication skills. Until then, consider how Assertive Communication is the best way to build a bridge between you, your customers and your staff.

About Shawnee

Shawnee holds a Masters Degree in Coaching Studies and is a two-time Olympian as the former Assistant Coach for the Canadian Women's Basketball Team. She has over 25 years of elite coaching and leadership experience including the Rio Olympics in 2016, the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, World Championships in Australia and Turkey, Pan Am Games in Toronto, FIBA Americas in Brazil and Argentina, and the World University Games in China.

Shawnee was the Head Coach at the University of Calgary for 18 years. She joined UC after coaching at Brandon University for two seasons. Since winning matters not only in sport but also in business, Shawnee has become a sought after corporate coach, life coach, mental toughness coach and motivational speaker. Her vast experience in the elite world of sport transfers directly to the boardroom where success is talent oriented and people driven. She is currently training corporate managers to become wise and insightful while leading their team to winning results.

