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COMM 101

Exercise 5

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During a conversation with my roommate, we were discussing the agreement that we would all do dishes and clean up after ourselves. In this case I would typically say something along the lines of “I need you to clean up after yourself and do dishes, nobody here has seen you do dishes yet.” But instead I changed my sentence to “I need you to rinse out your dishes when they are finished, and put them in the dishwasher. If the dishwasher is full, run it. If it is clean, empty it.” Changing my communication so that it was less abstract led to the discovery that one of my suite-mates had a completely different representation/idea of what doing dishes was. This allowed all the confusion to be cleared up.

During a recent meeting with my old high school robotics club, I was giving constructive criticism to a member on the team about his methods of teaching the programming team. In this case I would typically say something along the lines of “You need not just to focus on the robot’s code, but also focus on teaching all of the other members. This is so that everyone has common knowledge.” But instead I changed my sentence to “I would practice my coding techniques, but at the same time I would show members what I did and how I did it. This allows each member to have about the same skill level. That is how I would go about it.” Changing my communication so that I took ownership by using “I” led to that member feeling more open and less criticized about his teaching methods. This led to him asking even more question and receiving more feedback.

During a conversation with my friend, we were casually talking about classes and teachers. That day I was complaining about a math teacher I had. In this case I would typically say something along the lines of “She never teaches, all she does is give out online assignments.” But instead I changed my sentence to “Most of the time she isn’t teaching. I typically have to learn the material through the online site instead of through her.” Changing my communication so that it was more qualified and less vague gave my friend a better understanding of what I was trying to say. This allowed him to be more sympathetic, and agreeable.

During times where communication is essential I could attempt at using at least one or more of the communication techniques that I tried earlier. This would help out quite often since communication, even with casual talks, seems to make some sort of impact. I can focus on using more specific language, avoiding stereotypes, and taking ownership of the conversation. By improving communication I can improve my self-image and relationships with a variety of different people.

This exercise was very challenging because of the fact that I had to think and synthesize what it was that I wanted to say. This led me to me preparing what I would say beforehand. Using these techniques makes an individual think about what he/she is going to say. It was hard not to just go back to the natural instinct to simply say something. Instead I have to carefully pick and choose my words in order to convey the correct meaning. However it did prove to be very effective.