

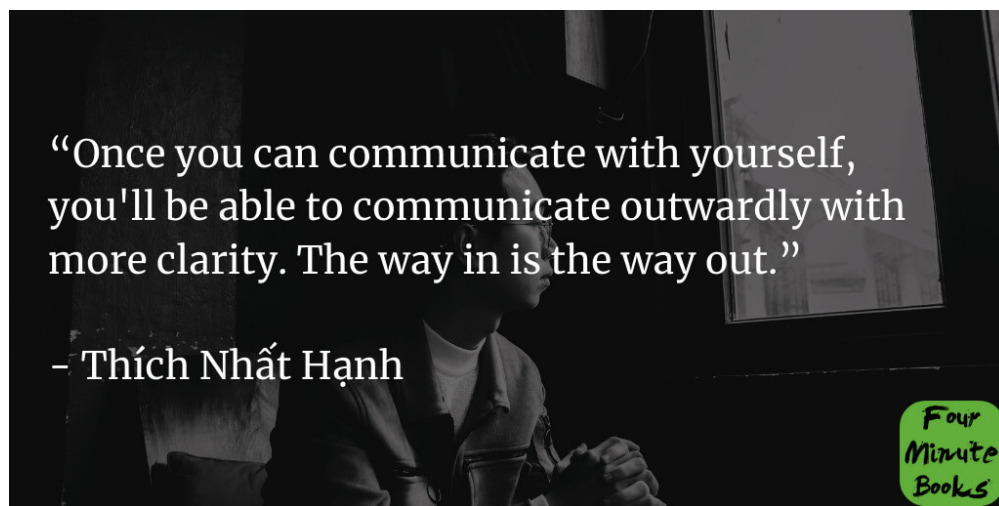
The Art Of Communicating Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Art Of Communicating* will improve your interpersonal and relationship skills by identifying the power of using mindfulness when talking with others, showing you how to listen with respect, convey your ideas efficiently, and most of all deepen your connections with others.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



A lot of people will tell you the most important thing in a relationship is communication. Even though we have good intentions, communication is a challenge for most people. Whether you're talking to a coworker, a friend, or a family member, it's easy to misunderstand or be misunderstood.

Have you ever wondered how you can say what you mean in a way another person will understand? Or how you can really listen with the intent to understand? Or maybe you've wondered why everyone communicates so differently and how we can reach across these differences.

All of these questions, and more, are answered in Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *The Art of Communicating*. Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist Zen master, peace activist, poet, and scholar. He seeks to teach others the art of mindful thinking to help in daily life.

In the book, he helps you understand what communication is good and what you should avoid. He teaches that in order to communicate well with others, you need to communicate with yourself.

These are the 3 most memorable lessons I got out of this book:

1. Everything you speak is either nourishing or toxic to others.
2. Learn how to communicate well with yourself if you want to get better at connecting with others.
3. Be consistently compassionate and honest to nurture others with loving speech.

Let's dive right in and discover the connection between mindfulness and communication!

Lesson 1: You either nourish or harm others with every word you speak.

We learn there are two main kinds of speech: nourishing and toxic. Like food, some communication can nourish our bodies, and other communication can be poisonous. Nourishing speech seeks to understand and remains positive. Toxic speech is negative and makes you feel emotions like anger or frustration.

Imagine you write a paper for a class and your teacher's feedback is "This is terrible work." This would be toxic speech. But if she said something like "There are things we can improve here," that would be considered nourishing speech. Though she still is being honest, you can use this feedback constructively.

So how can you work on using this yourself? First, you need to understand your own way of communicating. You can do this through mindfulness. Mindfulness lets you communicate clearly without judgment. Because it is objective, you can truly examine things you think. Sometimes you might want to say toxic things, but you'll be able to stop them beforehand.

This can also help you be more immune to others' toxic speech. **Mindfulness will enable you to judge less and realize their toxic speech is actually a result of suffering inside.** You will become more compassionate toward them and know not to take what they have to say personally.

Lesson 2: To get better at communicating with others, learn how to understand yourself better.

You probably spend a good amount of your day talking to others. Maybe this is in person with family or clients, or maybe it's online through email. But do you spend a lot of time communicating with yourself? Probably not.

Communicating with yourself on a regular basis is crucial for mindfulness. It's also essential for communicating with others in a healthy way. One way to communicate with yourself is listening to your body and your mind.

Just taking a minute to sit down and concentrate on breathing can accomplish this. This will draw you completely into the moment, instead of the past or future. All that matters when being mindful is the way you feel at the time emotionally and physically. This is particularly

helpful when you are suffering. Sometimes we don't know why exactly we're suffering, and getting in tune with what's wrong with us will help us get to the bottom of it.

When you become a master at communicating with yourself, you will get better at communicating with those around you. **When we understand ourselves we can finally understand others.** Imagine a person who feels like they are stuck and suffering in their relationship. Something is bothering her, but she doesn't know exactly what.

Through mindfulness, she can come to realize that her problem with her partner is that he doesn't help around the house. When she understands her own suffering, it will help her find compassion for his suffering. For example maybe he is overworked and exhausted. She can then use nourishing speech and work together with him to come up with a solution.

Lesson 3: Your loving speech nurtures others when you are honest and compassionate with them.

Hanh tells of a Vietnamese saying that says "it doesn't cost anything to have loving speech." If we choose our words wisely, we can make others happy. How can we have loving speech?

Hanh teaches that the first rule of loving speech is to always tell the truth. This can be hard, particularly when the truth is painful. But if you speak it with gentleness, it will be healthier and feel better than lying. This builds essential trust in the long run, allowing the other person to feel safe. If you lie to avoid hurting feelings, they will find out the truth later, and it will be more painful.

We also need to understand that loving speech can be different for different people.

Everyone needs to be spoken to differently because we all have our own way of perceiving and coping with the world.

Hanh shares a story about Buddha that illustrates this concept. A person once asked Buddha where he would go after he died. Buddha said he wouldn't go anywhere. A little later, Someone else asked him the same question and he answered differently. When asked why his answer changed, Buddha replied that his answer depends on the person's ability to understand. Just like you speak differently to a young child, make sure you are speaking in a way that individual will understand.

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The Art Of Communicating Review

And mindfulness knocks it out of the park again! I love Thích Nhất Hạnh's way of relating this remarkable tool to just about every aspect of life. *The Art Of Communication* gives a much-needed perspective on relating to others that has the power to improve any relationship!

Who would I recommend The Art Of Communicating summary to?

The 32-year-old who wants to become more outgoing but struggles to connect with others, the 57-year-old that doesn't understand their adult children very well and would like to become closer with them, and anyone who wants to become better at communicating.