

Out of the six characteristics of competent communication, I would say that *self-monitoring* would be my single major strength. While mid-conversation, I can read faces of people pretty easily to gauge whether or not they are genuinely interested in what I'm saying. When I read that I am not engaging them in conversation, or that I am beginning to sound stupid I just give up on the conversation and move on to the next one. I believe that this is important because it prevents me from wasting energy on an uninterested listener. The nice thing about self-monitoring is it allows me to be adaptable in the conversation if I want to be, especially when it comes to generational gap conversations (Upper or Lower). In order to be adaptable within conversation, however, you must first have the self-monitoring skill to be competent at the adaptable conversation. Thus in order to be a competent adaptive communicator, you must first have competent self-monitoring.

In person, the facial expressions and tone of someone who is engaged in the conversation is what becomes quite apparent. Body language of a listener indicating disinterest may look like: looking around for an exit, a general lack of eye contact, and forgetting what we are talking about- not being 100% glued to the conversation, it's obvious when you aren't sparking their interest. Honestly, I really don't think it has much to do with the person talking about the particular subject, I think it's the person of interest doesn't care about that topic at that point. However, that can work to your advantage since you can tell immediately if someone is interested in the topic then you can decide to either continue or move on with the conversation.

Online, self-monitoring is slightly more difficult depending on how much character the person of interest puts into the conversation via text. Their replies can demonstrate their emotions and reactions *precisely*, or on the other hand, they could have difficulties putting their emotions and reactions into text. I have noticed this mostly with the Baby-Boomer generation, but also some in the Gen-Y (Millennials) and Gen-Z (Zoomer) generations. However, I absolutely love communicating like this since it requires the least amount of effort, you can do it from the comfort of your own home, and you can tell *immediately* and *effortlessly* if the person of interest is intrigued in the conversation, and in turn, you. In a really weird way, this is the most rewarding portion of a self-monitoring communication strength- the online reward portion.

Two specific examples that I can cite would be the following: During my third deployment in Iraq, I had to explain to officers multiple times the situation we were facing with our networks. Many challenged me on my expertise, which with my confidence in the subject, I was easily able to overcome the challenge. However, with group conversations that I attempted to do in my Computer Science club, I recognized that my skills were lacking and needed significant improvement before I could make a worthwhile contribution to the club. Whilst publically speaking, I began to become self-conscious since I wasn't confident in the subject. Which from my perception, made me appear uneducated while incoherently rambling.