**How to Speak the Same Language So You Are Heard**

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<http://www.womenworking.com/speak-language-heard/>



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“My mom taught me to meet people where they are,” says Pam Lipp-Hendricks. As a daughter of interracial parents who were married in the ‘60s, she learned early on how to let things go in order to move forward – wise advice that she has carried with her throughout her career.

Here are Pam’s insights on how to build bridges and effectively communicate with others.

**Show Interest**  
It’s important to want to get to know them. People tend to engage and share more when you show interest. Be observant–you can hear their tone of voice and sense when they’re opening up. Respectful curiosity is the start to strengthening the bond and foundation of a new relationship.

**Ask Away**  
I’m the kind of person that will engage with someone as I’m walking down the street – simply by saying *hello*. To break the ice, comment on something that’s happening right in front of you. Ask questions about where they’re from. Others will offer you all sorts of interesting tidbits.

**Differences Aren’t Deadly**  
People are people and we all have differences. When you encounter something you don’t understand, ask clarifying questions that let them know that you don’t have all of the answers and are open to learning. Get comfortable with not knowing everything and understand that people don’t expect you to.

**Don’t Pretend**  
I was more insecure when I was younger and I learned the hard way that you have to be authentic. I would always nod my head during a conversation and act like I knew what the other person was talking about, but when I walked away I would think, “I have absolutely no idea what just happened.” Because I led them to believe that I knew what they were talking about, I missed out on an opportunity to understand and learn something new.

**Everyone Has a Story to Tell**  
I took a Lyft recently and my driver was from Algeria. We were in the car for about 40 minutes and started chatting. I found out that he married a Dominican woman, saw photos of his children, and talked about his mother.  He also told me about Tunisia – where he often spends time at the beach. Now I know about a cool vacation spot!

**Be Perceptive**   
People want to talk about themselves, however, it’s possible to push too hard. Notice if the tone or body language shifts, signifying that you’ve gone too far.  If you do, say something like “I didn’t mean to offend you…” or “I was just trying to learn.”  Be aware of how the other person is feeling.

**Choose Your Words Wisely**  
There are certain words and phrases that can either connect and inspire or create distance and distrust. “We” is a big one when it comes to building connections. Someone I was working on a project with e-mailed me a note. Immediately after sending it, he sent a follow-up note apologizing for using “I” in the e-mail instead of “we.” He felt the need to include all of us in his accomplishments and that made an impact on me.

“Ours” is an interesting word because it can connect or divide depending on the context. If I’m speaking to you and “our” refers to you and I, then it’s inclusive. However, if ‘our’ refers to my in-group of people, then it becomes an exclusive word.