**Crafting Communication**

Today, let's embark on a journey of unwavering life skills. Have you ever worried about the possibility of artificial intelligence, often called AI, would replace you in your profession? As renowned novelist Oliver Goldsmith once said, "Life is a journey that must be traveled no matter how bad the roads and accommodations," and it holds true in the context of our discussion today. 'm here not as an expert but as someone with the same objective as you to acquire different skills.

Toastmaster of the day, my fellow Toastmasters, and dear guests.

Many of you would likely agree that employees working in the technology domain enjoy good perks. However, it's essential to be aware that they must continuously update their skills to stay abreast of the latest cutting-edge technologies and skills. Right? Failing to do so puts them in the risk zone.

With that understanding, I have been working in software development organizations for the last decade. I always tried to stay ahead of the crowd by constantly acquiring new skills in new technology. Even after proficiency in C++ and Java programming languages, I never missed a chance to learn and gain experience in cutting-edge technology like Blockchain, 5G, IoT, Docker, or Kubernetes. Whenever I saw another team working on new technology, I used to plead with my manager to put me in that specific team. Additionally, during job interviews, I made sure that I would get a chance to work with new technologies.

Still, I used to feel insecure that AI would replace me. So, I started learning Machine Learning and AI itself. After some time, I learned that AI would not only replace non-AI roles but also AI developer roles.

After contemplating it, I realized leadership is one of the skills that AI would not replace. That was one of the motives to join a Toastmasters Club. Last year, just after joining the Toastmaster Club, I got promoted to a team lead. I was over the moon, and I got a chance to develop my leadership qualities by guiding, assisting, and uplifting four of my teammates.

Recently, our organization had a yearly performance review cycle. Guess what? My manager said, "Somnath, you have good technical skills, you're hardworking, and able to meet deadlines. However, we have received complaints from three out of four teammates that they feel you are unsupportive or don’t acknowledge their point of view or efforts and sometimes exhibit arrogance in your interactions with them."

From the bottom of my heart, I thank the Toastmaster Curriculum because, while contemplating my manager’s feedback, I was preparing for my project, “Understanding your Communication Style.” I realized what my communication style is and what the styles of my teammates are.

To make you aware, I would like you to walk through my realization process. There are four team members in my team, and there are four communication styles defined in Toastmasters.

1. My first team member, Rahul, is clear, concise, straightforward, and likes to get to the point while communicating. He falls into the **Direct** communication style. Let me elaborate with a real experience.

When I asked Rahul, "You have to develop one new ABC feature, what would be your effort estimation or how much time you will require to develop that this feature?" Rahul said, “Somnath, I need 32 hours and 15 minutes.” See, concise and straightforward.

1. My second team member is Hitesh. He is detail-oriented and thoroughly analyzes the data before making decisions. He falls in **Analytical** Communication Style.

When I asked him the same query about effort estimation for this feature, “Somnath, I need to check the facts and data. Let me analyze and evaluate it first.” He falls into an Analytic style.

1. My third team member is Aditi. She is sociable and empathetic. She is falling into a **Supportive** communication style.

When I asked the same query about feature effort estimation, she said, “Somnath, let's have a coffee; we will discuss it over coffee.” I believe I also have a Supportive communication style, and I think she was one of the four team members who didn't complain to my manager about me. Please don't think there was any other reason.

1. My fourth team member is Lalit. He is proactive and enthusiastic, always exploring and coming up with new ideas. He always **Initiating** communication style.

When I asked the same question about effort estimation, he said to me, “Somnath, I have a brilliant idea. If you consider it, in fact, we don't need to develop this feature in the first place.”

In conclusion, through this process what I realized is that the communication style of all my team members was not wrong. Going ahead, what I need to do is understand the communication style of another person. Accordingly, in different situations and contexts, I need to switch my style instead of staying in the same style all the time. That will benefit not only me but also the other party. So, I have one last question for all of you, "What's your communication style?"