Communication Skills
For ~~Dummies~~ Engineers

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Hi, I'm J.

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If You Give $50, So Will I!

bit.ly/water-ccc

"charity:water is a non-profit organization that provides clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. The organization was founded in 2006 and has helped fund 22,936 projects in 24 countries, benefiting over 4.6 million people." - Wikipedia

"4/4 Stars"
- CharityNavigator.org

charity: water

Summary

1. Model of Communication
2. Basic Communication Tips
3. Listening
4. Diversity
5. Communication Media
6. Tools
7. Ideas Further Action

**Disclaimer

Far from a perfect communicator
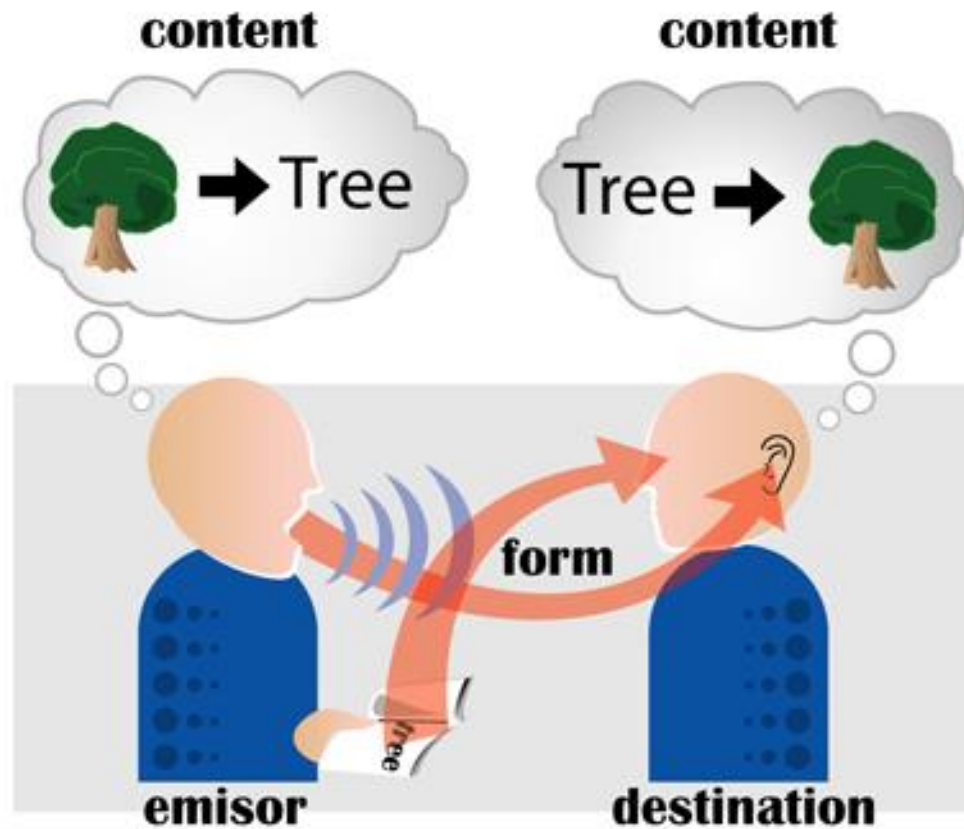
Learned a lot the hard way

Me presenting this session

How Do You Identify An Outgoing Programmer?
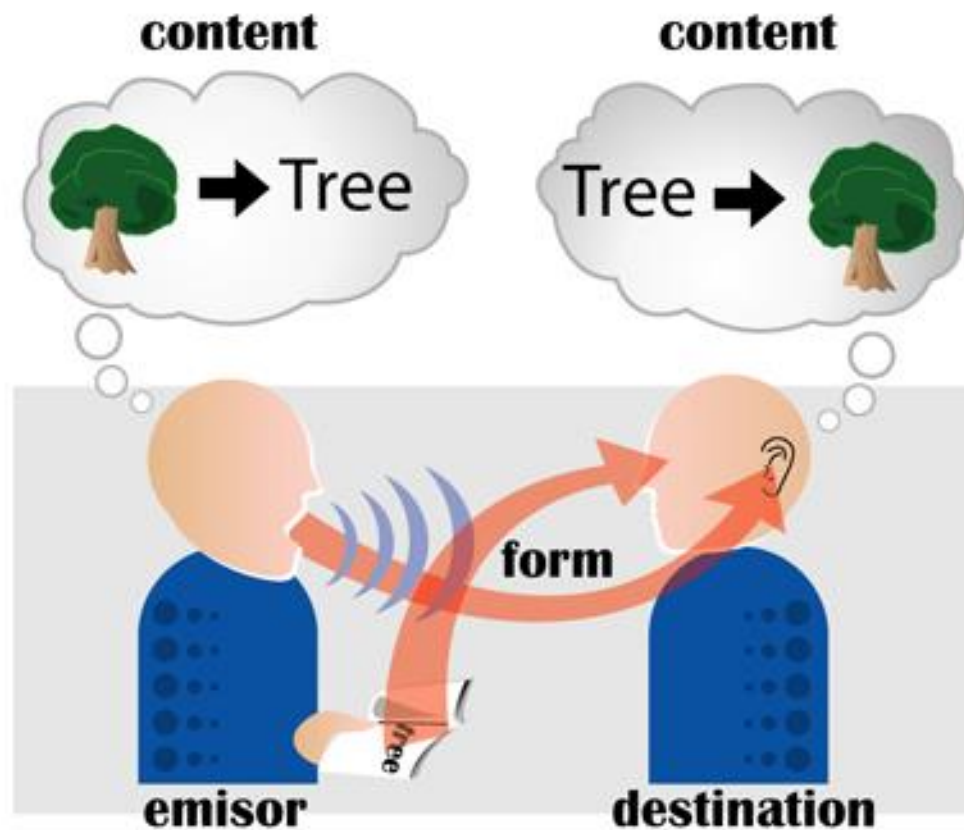
How Do You Identify An Outgoing Programmer?

They stare at *YOUR* shoes when they talk to you.

Model of Human Communication

1. Idea
2. Encoded
3. Transmitted
4. Decoded
5. Idea

Model of Human Communication

1. Idea
2. Encoded
3. Transmitted
4. Decoded
5. Idea

PROBLEMS

IDEA ≠ IDEA

Basic Communication Tips

Be Precise

Include enough details

Don't assume someone knows

Be Concise

Don't ramble

Don't repeat yourself

Remember your audience

The art of the executive summary

Use Nonverbal Communication

Not just IQ, develop your EQ

Crossed arms

Eye-contact

Use the "Yes, and…" Rule

Assume the Best

Listen!

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."
- Steven Covey

70-80% of waking hours in communication, of that
 9% writing
 16% reading
 30% speaking
 45% listening

http://extension.missouri.edu/p/CM150

Active & Reflective Listening

Reflective Listening

1. Focus and eliminate distraction
2. Embracing the speaker's perspective without necessarily agreeing
3. Mirroring mood and tone
4. Summarize what was said in your own words

Active Listening

1. Pay Attention
2. Show That You're Listening
3. Provide Feedback
4. Defer Judgment
5. Respond Appropriately

1. Pay Attention

Undivided attention

Acknowledge the message

Recognize non-verbal communication

Eye-contact

Put aside distracting thoughts

Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal

Avoid being distracted by environmental factors

2. Show That You're Listening

Use body language to convey your attention

Nod occasionally

Smile and use other facial expressions

Open posture

Comments like yes, and uh huh.

3. Provide Feedback

As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said.

May require you to reflect and ask questions.

Use paraphrasing

Ask clarifying questions

Summarize the speaker's comments

Tip: If you find yourself responding emotionally to what someone said, say so, and ask for more information: "I may not be understanding you correctly, and I find myself taking what you said personally. What I thought you just said is XXX; is that what you meant?"

4. Defer Judgment

Interrupting is a waste of time

Allow the speaker to finish a point before questions

Don't interrupt with counter arguments

5. Respond Appropriately

Use active listening

Be candid, open, and honest

Assert your opinions respectfully

Golden rule

Communication and Diversity

Gender

Over-generalizations are dangerous
Some things are conditioned by culture
Differences are not right/wrong
Can be source of miscommunication

Giving Orders
 Softening demands or statements
Asking Questions
 Gathering Information vs showing interest

https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/he-said-she-said

Minority Groups

Empathy, empathy, empathy

Assume the best

Be curious rather than offended

Don't be defensive – assume you'll make mistakes

Remember there are different norms and mores

Autism Spectrum

Don't take style personally

Be clear / tendency toward literal

Expect limited eye contact
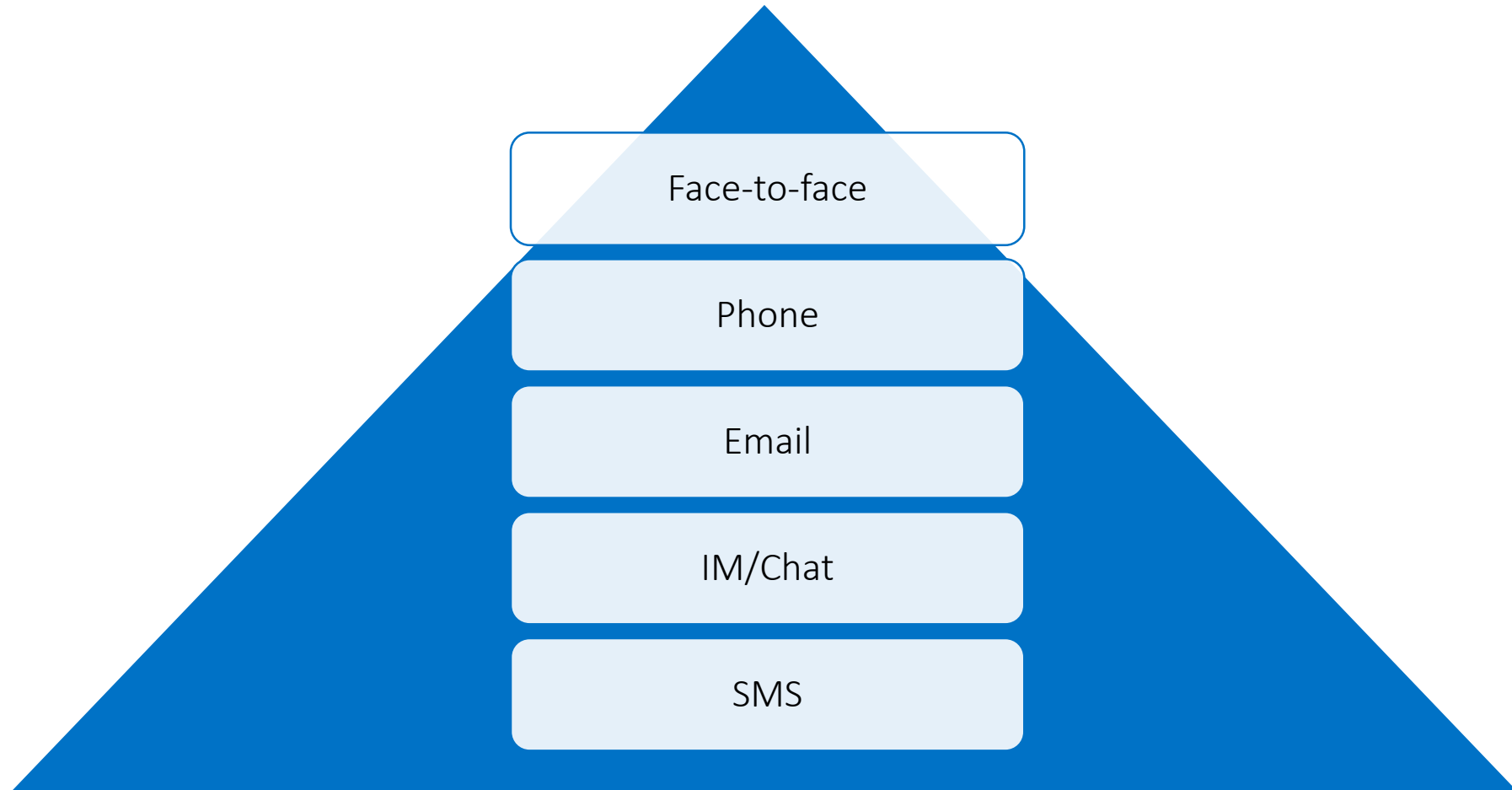
Assume difficult past experiences

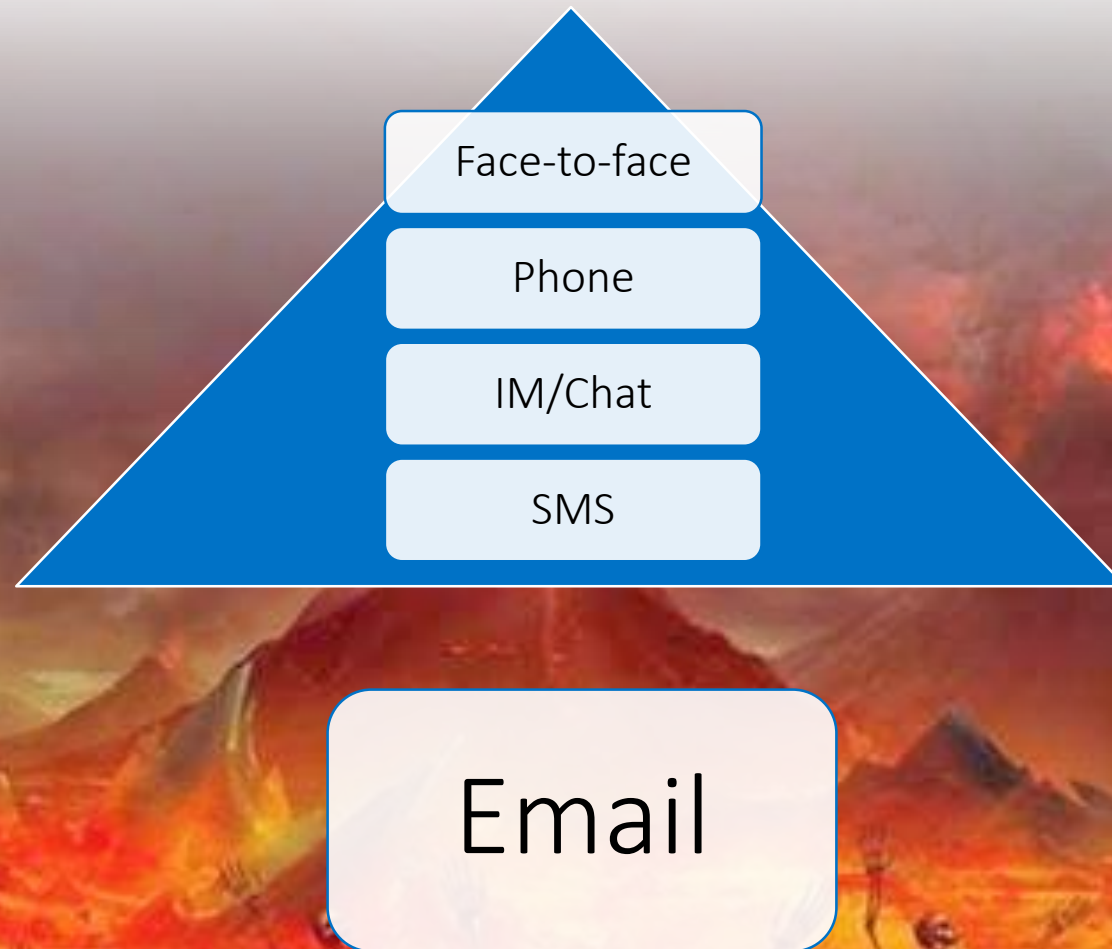Don't condescend or talk down

Avoid talking loudly or yelling

Don't touch without warning

Communication Media

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Face-to-face

Phone

IM/Chat

SMS

Email

Face-to-Face

More trust

Richer communication (multiple channels)

Best way to resolve conflict

Often more creative and collaborative

Quicker back-and-forth

Tends to be single-threaded

Some Face-to-Face Tips

Eye contact

"I feel…" statement

"Oh yeah? Well *MY* dad…"

Silence your brain while listening

Ask questions

Phone

Includes some non-verbal communication information

Quicker back-and-forth

Tends to be single-threaded

Some Phone Tips

Identify yourself

"Is now a good time to talk about..."

Plan ahead

Know what you want and keep it short

Know your relationship

Use oral cues (mmhmmm, yes, ok...)

Email

Takes longer to compose sometimes

Most people get too much

Too easy to CC people for FYI

Good at capturing information for the record

Some Email Tips

Don't write paragraphs, write lists
Keep it short and about one thing
Change the subject line to match
Don't CC/BCC people who aren't actively involved
Never send an email angry
Avoid addressing more than one person
Lead with your need
Use out-of-office
Review before sending

IM/Chat

Quickest back-and-forth of electronic media

Can reduce focus and flow

Allows recipient to prioritize

Best at quick questions to unblock

Some IM/Chat Tips

Greeting, showing interest

Best if you've already met

Abbreviations

NO bad news

Be patient

Be quick

Make it clear when you're done

SMS

Slowest and most potentially disjointed
Greatest potential to interrupt
Good for after-hours attention

Some SMS Tips

Get permission (4%)

Don't text off-hours unless necessary

Don't text when you're with others

Avoid complicated replies

Limited use of emojis, only to add non-verbal content

Limited abbreviations

Keep it professional

Tools

Unifying Platforms

Slack
Microsoft Teams
Basecamp

Task Tracking

Jira
Trello
VSTS
Github

Video Chat

Skype
Slack
Google Hangouts
Etc.

Meeting

GoToMeeting
Join.me
Skype for Business
WebEx
Etc

Document Sharing

Dropbox

Onedrive

Google Drive

Etc

Ideas for Further Action

Writing class, blogging to practice written communication
Improv, acting, speaking at conferences to practice spoken
Other (listening)

Recap

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