

Week 02

Week 02 | Communication reflection journal

I have to admit that my need for communicating with people is pretty limited. I am retired. I have few needs or wants. I don't have to sell anyone on anything. What communicating I do with others is typically very simple. Can I say an interaction I had with someone was particularly effective if it did not result in any conflict?

Monday:

On Monday mornings I swim for an hour at the Jewish Community Center. I often commiserate with the other guys in the locker room on the topic of the day. These days, due to the war in the Gaza Strip, antisemitism is a popular topic. I try to show confidence by pointing out that Israel is a modern country surrounded by people living in the 6th century. We should be able to handle whatever problems we have with the neighbors.

Tuesday:

Tuesdays I typically hike in the Penasquitos Canyon. On occasion I encounter other hikers. I do my best to be friendly and optimistic. Sometimes I encounter one of the two park rangers, both are girls these days, and strike up a conversation with them about sightings or problems in the park. I always thank them for their service.

Wednesday:

This is the day I do my grocery shopping on. I feel I have become extremely proficient in getting through the checkout line in an orderly and expeditious manner. The first thing I do is place one of those little partitions on the conveyor so the checker knows where the previous customer's products end and mine begin. Then I place my items on the conveyor belt, with the heaviest items first, and oriented so the price tag or barcode is easy to locate. I bring my own bags in order to "save the environment". I do my own bagging in order to keep the process moving. I am ready to make payment when the checker is ready. When I get the receipt I keep it handy for review.

Thursday:

Sometimes, I think it is better not to communicate. We have a young woman living with us. When I try to make conversation with her, she likes to tell me she is a very private person, and that we have nothing in common. Her responses to me make me wonder why I bother trying to develop any kind of rapport with her. I have decided to leave well enough alone. If all I do

cause her discomfort I best leave her alone. Though I would like to develop a friendship with this woman, communications is beyond me.

Friday:

Every Friday I get a massage from a Chinese woman in my neighborhood. Though her English is not good and I have no ability to acquire her language, we are able to communicate sufficiently to achieve our objectives. After the massage I always give her a good tip, praise her for her work, and assure her of my desire to return. She seems very happy with me as a client.

Reflection:

I have spent my entire life honing my communications skills. I don't think it is a matter of how to handle all the various situations that may arise. For me, the key is mental attitude. As long as I take responsibility for my own feelings, I have the best chance of a positive outcome. If I have a disagreement I do my best to keep the focus on the problem, and not who is responsible for it. I avoid the blame game and try to get the other party to collaborate with me in solving the problem.

I also think it is important to know when to disengage. There are irrational people out there. And if they refuse to have a meeting of the minds despite my best attempts, it is time to disengage. Agree to disagree.

Sometimes I have difficulty in determining whether what I feel is empathy or pity. I am not a mind reader so I do my best to avoid making any presumption about the motives of others. That is, unless they tell me their motives outright.