

Barriers to Effective Communication

By: Tayyaba Usman

A barrier to communication

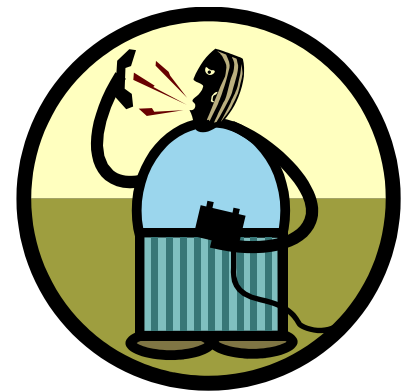
- ▶ *"A barrier to communication is something that keeps meanings from meeting. Meaning barriers exist between all people, making communication much more difficult than most people seem to realize. It is false to assume that if one can talk he can communicate. Because so much of our education misleads people into thinking that communication is easier than it is, they become discouraged and give up when they run into difficulty. Because they do not understand the nature of the problem, they do not know what to do. The wonder is not that communicating is as difficult as it is, but that it occurs as much as it does."*

Stress

- ▶ When people are under stress, they are more apt to inject communication barriers into their conversation. These barriers can exist in any of the three components of communication (verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal).

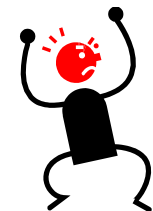
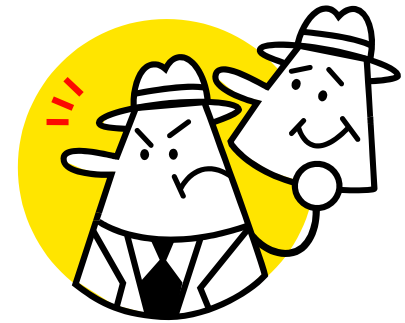


.According to Thomas Gordon, author of the Parent Effectiveness Training program, people use communication barriers 90% of the time in conflict situations. For this reason, it is worthwhile to describe some of the common responses that will, inevitably, have a negative effect on communications:



Verbal Communication Barriers

- ▶ 1. Attacking (interrogating, criticizing, blaming, shaming)



Example

- ▶ "If you were doing your job and supervising Susie in the lunch line we probably wouldn't be in this situation, would we?"
- ▶ "Have you followed through with the counseling we asked you to do? Have you gotten Ben to the doctor's for his medical checkup? Did you call and arrange for a Big Brother? Have you found out if you're eligible for food stamps?"

- ▶ "From what I can see, you don't have the training to teach a child with ADHD. Obviously if you did you would be using different strategies that wouldn't make her feel like she's a bad person."



2. "You Messages" (moralizing, preaching, advising, diagnosing)

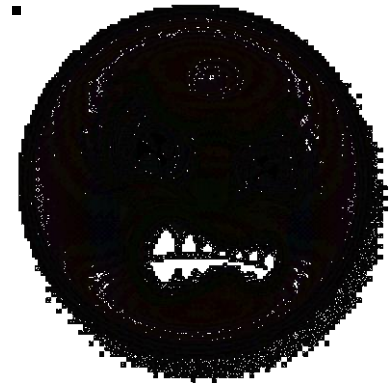
- ▶ "You don't seem to understand how important it is for your child to get this help. Don't you see that he's well on his way to becoming a sociopath?"

"You obviously don't realize that if you were following the same steps we do at home you wouldn't be having this problem. You don't seem to care about what is going on in this child's life outside of school."



3. Showing Power (ordering, threatening, commanding, directing)

- ▶ "If you don't voluntarily agree to this evaluation we can take you to due process. Go ahead and file a complaint if you want to."
- ▶ "I'm going to write a letter of complaint to the superintendent and have this in your file if you don't stop humiliating my son in front of his classmates. I know my rights."



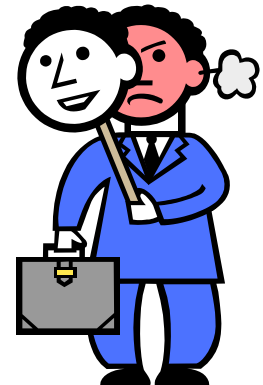
- ▶ 4. Other Verbal Barriers: shouting, name calling, refusing to speak.



Nonverbal Communication Barriers

1. Flashing or rolling eyes
2. Quick or slow movements.
3. Arms crossed, legs crossed
- ▶ 4. Gestures made with exasperation
- ▶ 5. Slouching, hunching over
- ▶ 6. Poor personal care
- ▶ 7. Doodling
- ▶ 8. Staring at people or avoiding eye contact
- ▶ 9. Excessive fidgeting with materials

All of these examples of barriers thwart communication, mutual understanding, respect, problem solving, and identifying solutions that will meet everyone's needs. They put a serious strain on relationships that ultimately need to be collaborative in order to most effectively meet the needs of our children. Use of these "communication errors" results in increased emotional distancing between the parties, escalation in the intensity of the conflict and a negative environment for everyone involved.



Effective Communication . . .



- ▶ It is two way.
- ▶ It involves active listening.
- ▶ It reflects the accountability of speaker and listener.
- ▶ It utilizes feedback.
- ▶ It is free of stress.
- ▶ It is clear.

