



Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

Episode 22 Transcript

Communicating Nose-to-Nose

If some benevolent genie from some ornamental bottle suddenly appeared and offered to grant me a single wish (tradition teaches that three wishes are customary, but we all know the economy is not what it once was), I know very well what I would wish for. I would wish for the ability to communicate effectively with anyone and everyone I met – ON THEIR LEVEL! Whether aged eight or eighty; Ph.D. or eighth grade dropout; male or female; American or citizen of the world; I would wish to communicate with clarity and understanding. Can you even imagine the influence and impact that such a skill could allow?

Well, we all know wishing won't get it done, but working to develop the skill will. Here are six steps that you can begin using immediately to enhance your ability to communicate nose-to-nose.

1. **Talk with people.** Don't talk down to people, or up to people. Don't talk about people, around people or behind people. Talk with people! Of course, it is easier said than done. It requires the fine art of listening, attention and concern for others and their point of view.
2. **Explain the process.** Take the time up front to explain what you are doing or will do. Don't assume others already know and don't try to save time by skipping this step. If you do, you will end up explaining it all later, only this time you will be explaining it to already frustrated people.
3. **Tell the truth.** Telling people what they want to hear may buy a little time, but it won't buy you a reputation as an excellent communicator. If it is going to hurt, tell people so. Let them prepare themselves emotionally for the experience. In so doing, people will begin to identify you as a "straight shooter."
4. **Work for understanding.** The key word here is work. Understanding doesn't always come easily. People learn in different ways and at different speeds. If you are the one initiating the communication, then it is your responsibility to make sure others understand your message.
5. **Get them involved.** People tend to accept that which they helped to create. So, as you communicate, clearly share what their role in the process is. The more they understand about their personal role, the better received is the communication.

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6. **Do your job!** A primary job of the leader is to communicate. Period. The more proficient you are at the task of communicating, the greater the opportunity to influence and impact others in a positive way.

Well, there they are -- six steps in learning to communicate more effectively one-on-one, or nose-to-nose. So what are you waiting for? Stop wishing you were a better communicator and start working to become one.