



Communication Culture

FACING '2010': CONNECT POSITIVELY WITH PEOPLE – FACE-TO-FACE AND COMMUNICATE WELL FROM THE START

By Helena Kaufman, *The Afro News Vancouver*

WHAT WERE YOUR TOP communication resolutions as you negotiated the recent social season? You certainly communicated wherever you attended.

Connecting with people is fun, healthy, profitable and well, human. That positive zing gives us energy and makes us feel good, especially when we also feel understood. Aren't these sound reasons to come out from behind the phones and computers and communicate face to face more in 2010?

How well did your last encounters go? Was it a family, or company gathering? Was there a first time meeting in a new situation such as a bar? Theatre? Club gathering? Business networking event? Chances are the quality of your conversation was affected by how likeable you seemed to people.

Were you sending signals that you were ready to connect, and in turn, welcome people's interest in conversing and connecting with you? Even if you didn't think you were transmitting, others were receiving your projected attitude, posture, tone of voice and eye contact with them.

Timing, counts.

Today's time pressures are such that impressions are formed, for better or for worse, with great speed. Still, why not enjoy connecting and reap the rewards of positively influencing an impression made in even a split second?

Getting attention is simple. Keeping someone's attention starts with your intended conversation partner's perception of your presence. This is

what you actually look like and how you move about the world. Add to this a positive and open attitude, revealed by what you actually say and how interesting you are to others, and you have the quick pass to positive connection with people.

Exercise your increasing communication skills as needed for business or personal contact. No need to be on high alert at all times. Do remember, however, that people may not remember what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel. It's very natural, isn't it?

Rippling Rapport

You set a ripple of communication in motion as soon as you become aware of anyone outside of yourself. The next step in communication is the greeting. The greeting acknowledges another person and is an opportunity to show you are safe and sincere.

Have you ever met someone to whom you were instantly willing to give your time and attention? You likely did this if you felt you could trust that person and perhaps you also felt understood.

An actual meeting is phase one of successful communicating. What makes it all mesh between greeting and meaningful communication is rapport. Rapport can be both instant, and built.

Next greet and meet encounter check the quality of the 93% of non verbal (before words) communication of you and your partner:

1. Eye contact

2. Posture

3. Space between you

4. Handshake or other physical connection touch

Some cultures even take into account breath as they get close enough to touch foreheads or noses.

"Feel" is a good check in with yourself. Your feeling about it serves as both blue print and evaluation of how well you are doing. The more common ground you have, interests and values, the more likely you will have an easy rapport. If it needs a bit of work, you can address barriers such as: our own fears, language difficulties or even the environment in which we meet and communicate.

VIP: Knowing what you want going into a communication with someone brings you closer to the result you are hoping for. Be aware and open and you will sparkle brightly when you communicate with people - right from the first impression.

Visit Helena's NEW blog on conversation and communication at www.hospitalityambassador.com. Helena is a communication consultant specializing in successful business writing and conversation coaching. Contact her at www.helenakaufman.com. Twitter, Face Book HelenaKaufman.