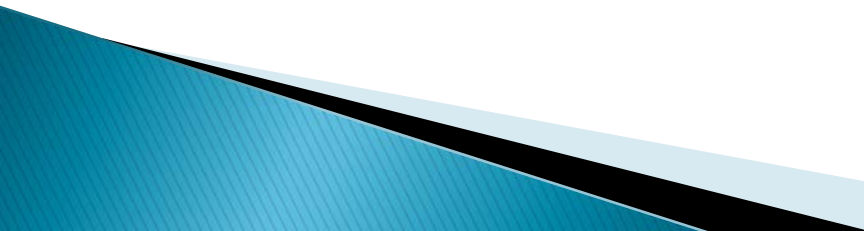


# Essential Communication Skills to Provide Effective Leadership and Create a Healthy Communication Climate

Donna Miller, Former Trustee, North Orange County Community College District  
Retired Speech Communication Professor and Instructional Dean, Liberal Arts  
Cerritos College

# Preview

- ▶ I. Create a positive communication climate
  - ▶ II. Become a good listener
  - ▶ III. Improve your perceptions
  - ▶ IV. Improving our nonverbal communication
  - ▶ V. Strategies for dealing with difficult people
  - ▶ VI. Understanding gender and intercultural differences in communication
  - ▶ VII. Making Meetings Work: Shared Leadership
- 

# I. Create a positive communication climate

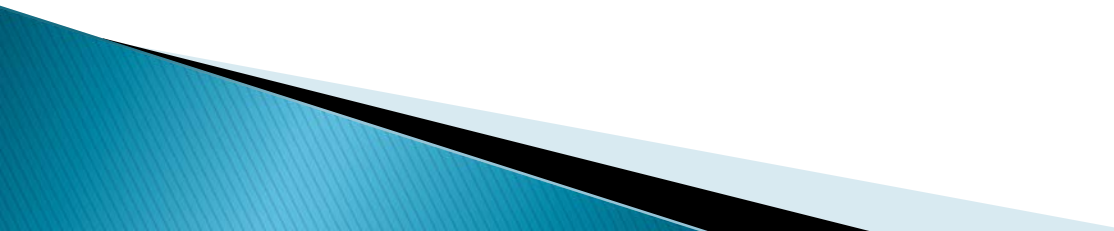
- ▶ Use descriptive vs. evaluative language
- ▶ Use provisional vs. dogmatic language
- ▶ Be honest vs. indirect/manipulative
- ▶ Problem solve rather than try to control
- ▶ Treat others equally rather than with a superior attitude

(Jack Gibb, Journal of Communication)



## II. BECOME A GOOD LISTENER

### Step #1: Attending

- ▶ Get physically and mentally ready. Be mindful; Fully engaged in the moment
  - ▶ Make a complete shift from speaker to listener. Make eye contact
  - ▶ Hear the person out before you react.
  - ▶ Observe their nonverbal cues/watch their actions/listen to their voice
- 

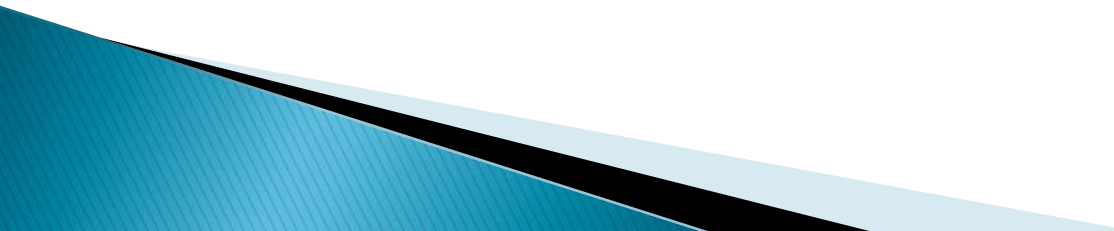
# Step #2: Understanding

- ▶ Paraphrase: Putting into your own words the meaning of the message
  - Content paraphrase
  - Feelings paraphrase

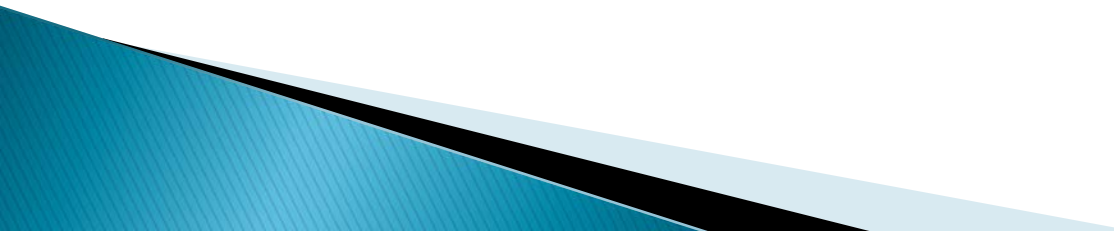
# Step #2: Understanding (*Continued*)

- ▶ Develop empathy: Identifying with the feelings of the other person
  - Empathic responsiveness: You've experienced a similar situation
  - Perspective taking: You put yourself in their shoes
  
- ▶ Questioning
  - Ask open questions to gain additional information.
  - Think about the kind of information you need
  - Monitor your nonverbal.

# Step #3: Responding

- State your intent to help; Use other centered messages
  - Acknowledge their feelings. Be careful not to criticize the other person's feelings and behavior; Don't tell them how they should feel
  - Respond with empathy. Hear the person out. Encourage them to elaborate
  - Reframe the situation if appropriate: Help them to see things from another point of view
  - Give advice ONLY if you ask their permission and they give it
- 

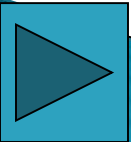
# Responding if you disagree, can't do what they want or want to give a critique

- ▶ Use “I” language vs. “You” language
  - ▶ Use specific, descriptive language and specific examples
  - ▶ Try to find a point of agreement or a compliment before you express your disagreement
- 

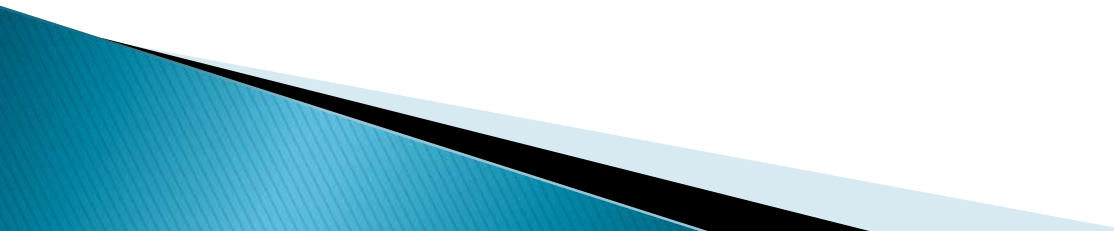


# INEFFECTIVE RESPONSES

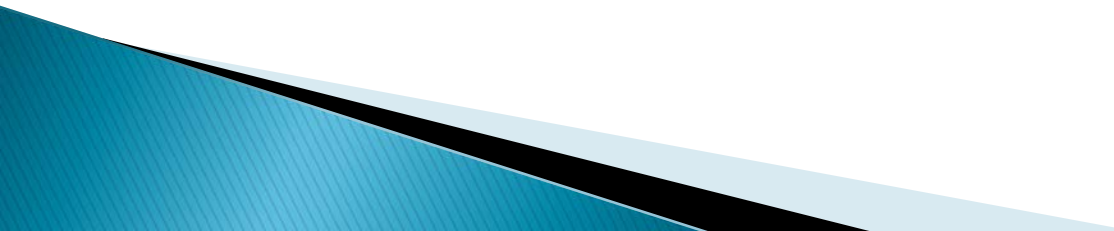
- Condemn & criticize the other person's feelings and behavior
- Tell the other person how to feel (“You should.....”)




# Avoid Inappropriate Responses

- ▶ Irrelevant responses
  - ▶ Tangential responses
  - ▶ Sarcastic responses
  - ▶ Interrupting responses
- 

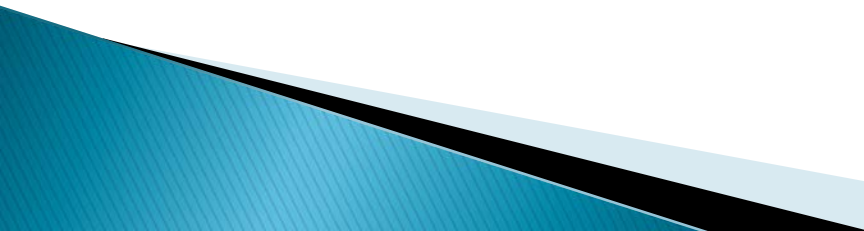
# Discussion Questions

1. What idea from the presentation did you find most useful? Why?
  2. What is an example of a behavior/problem/or positive example that relates to this idea?
  3. What question do you have about anything that was part of the presentation?  
(Discuss/brainstorm with your group)
- 

# III. Improving Perceptions

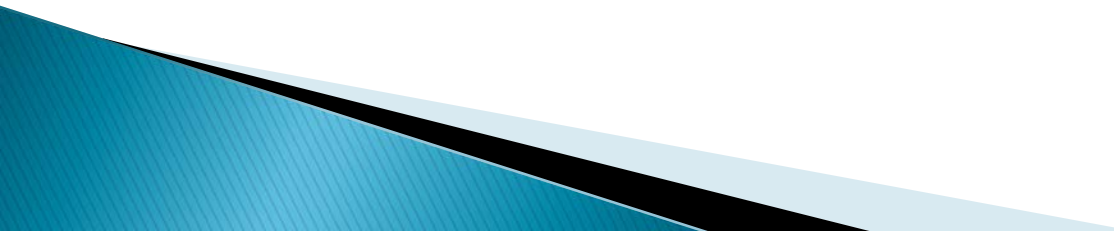
- ▶ Learn to recognize your personal biases
  - ▶ Recognize that people from different cultural backgrounds do not always have the same meaning of events, objects, and people
  - ▶ Verify your perceptions (perception check) If you don't ask, you may be open to misinterpretations
  - ▶ Be willing to change your misperceptions
- 

### III. IMPROVING PERCEPTIONS cont.

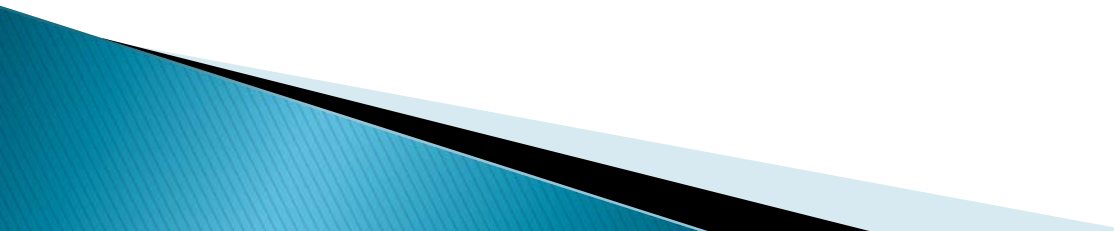
- ▶ Engage in Dual Perspective/See things from their point of view
  - ▶ Be aware when you are making attributions that may be incorrect
  - ▶ Become other centered. Ask:
    - What circumstances are affecting the other person?
    - What do I know about the person that explains their behavior or feelings?
    - What would I say if I was defending their position?
- 

# Perception Checking

Making a verbal statement that reflects your understanding of another person's behavior.

1. Describe the behavior of the other person.
  2. Verbalize your interpretation of that behavior.
- 

# Discussion Questions

1. What idea from the presentation did you find most useful? Why?
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- 

# IV. Improving Nonverbal Communication

## Characteristics of Nonverbal Communication

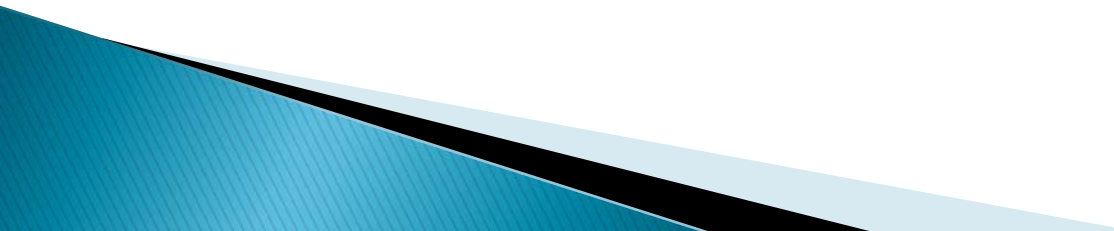
1. It is continuous
2. It is multi-channeled
3. It is intentional or un-intentional
4. Meaning can be ambiguous
5. It is the primary conveyor of emotions

“You cannot not communicate!”

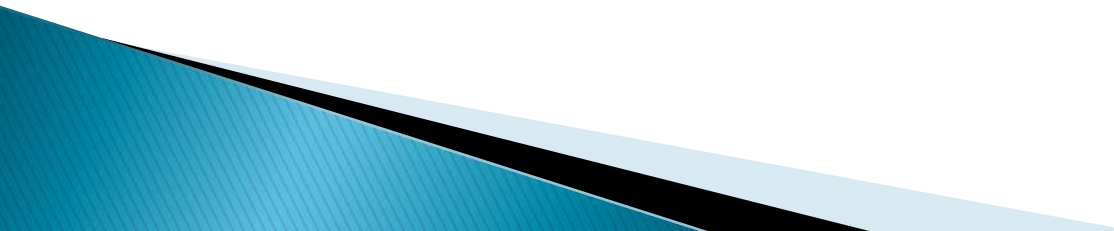




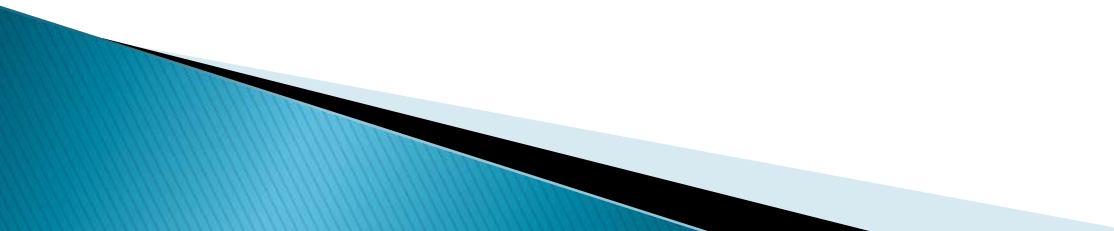
# Sources of Nonverbal Communication

- ▶ Body language: Gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, touch
  - ▶ Voice: Pitch, volume, rate, quality, pauses
  - ▶ Space: Personal space, Physical space/territory, Artifacts
  - ▶ Use of time: Chronemics
  - ▶ Self Presentation: Physical appearance; clothing and grooming
- 

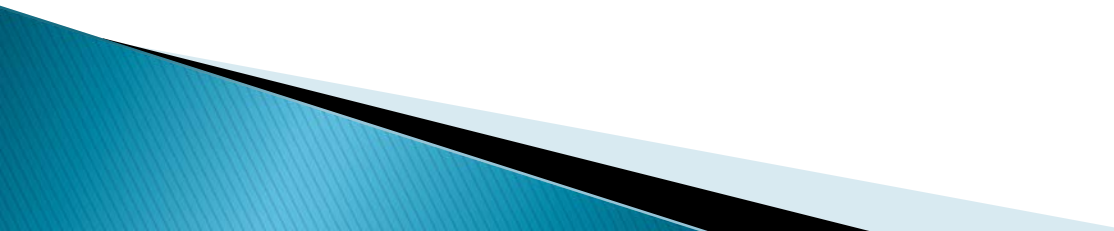
# Sending Nonverbal Messages

- ▶ Be conscious and purposeful in your behavior
  - ▶ Don't let the nonverbal interfere with your verbal message; Try to convey the same message verbally and nonverbally
  - ▶ Adapt your nonverbal to the situation as appropriate
- 

# Interpreting Nonverbal Messages

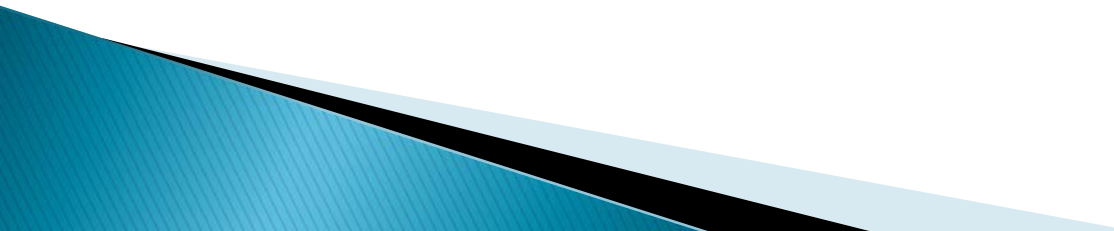
- ▶ Don't make assumptions
  - ▶ Consider cultural, gender, and individual differences
  - ▶ Pay attention to multiple aspects of the nonverbal communication
  - ▶ Check your perceptions to make sure they are correct
- 

# Discussion Questions

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(Discuss/brainstorm with your group)
- 

# V. EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

## **Three Techniques**

1. Direct expression of feeling
  2. Specific communication skills
  3. Who owns the problem?
- 

# FIVE STEPS IN THE DIRECT EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

## 1. State the feeling:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
(state an emotion: angry, upset, annoyed)

Handy Hint: Keep this simple and just state what you are feeling.



## 2. Behavioral Description

Describe the behavior that is related to the feeling in Step 1.

“We agreed to meet for lunch at 12:00 and you arrived at 12:30.”

Handy Hint: The behavior didn't CAUSE the feeling, YOU decided to feel that way! This also should be a DESCRIPTION, not an evaluation of their behavior.

### 3. Describe Two Possible Alternative Explanations for the Person's Behavior

“Perhaps you hit unexpected traffic or you didn't have my cell phone number to call.”

Handy Hint: Many time people do not have a negative intention and do not know something bothers you.





## 4. Behavioral Prescription

Prescribe what you would like the person to do in the future.

“The next time we are going to meet, I’d appreciate if you’d be on time or give me a call to let me know you’ll be late.”

Handy Hint: Make sure you avoid evaluating and simply describe the behavior you would appreciate.



# 5. Request Feedback

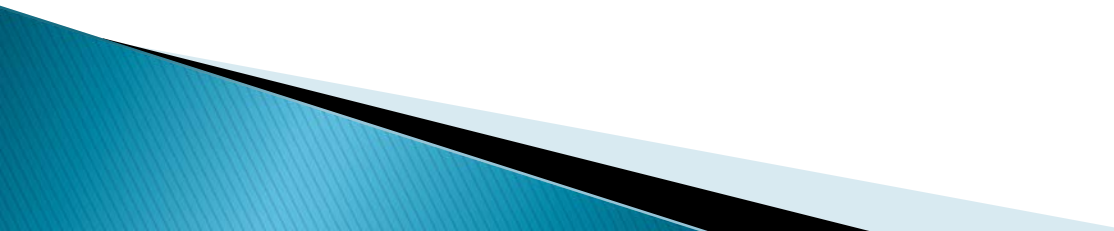
Indicate your willingness to hear the person's point of view.

“How do you feel about that? I would really like to work this out.”

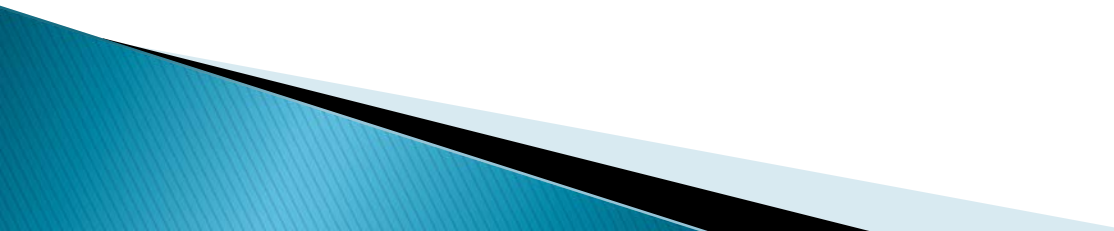
Handy Hint: Be genuine in wanting to hear the other person's point of view.



# REVIEW OF 5 STEPS

1. State your feeling
  2. Describe the behavior that is related to your feeling.
  3. Offer alternative explanations for the person's behavior.
  4. Prescribe what you would like the person to do in the future.
  5. Request feedback (and listen!) to the other person.
- 

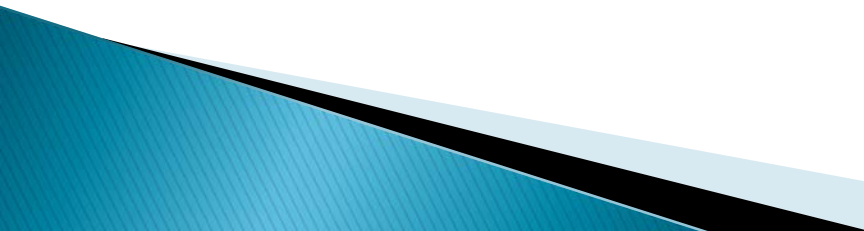
# A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

- ▶ You can use the Direct Expression of Feelings to tell someone a positive feeling or a compliment.
  - ▶ It's OK to change the order of the steps if it feels more comfortable.
  - ▶ You don't have to use language this formal but make sure you follow the guidelines.
- 

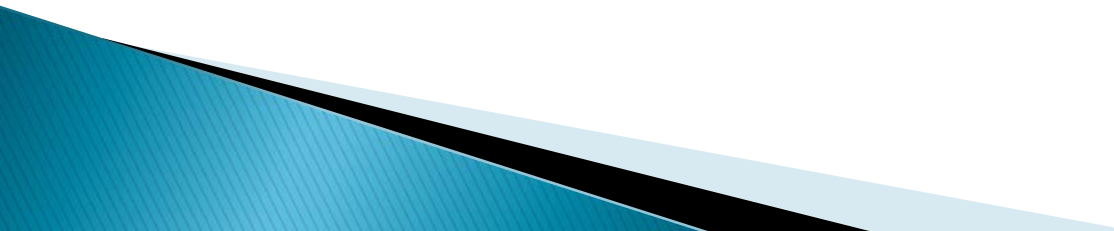
## 2. HELPFUL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

- ▶ Put up a shield, don't let them get to you and accept that you will not always make everyone happy.
- ▶ Respond assertively by using:
  - Fogging: Briefly paraphrasing/repeating their comment.
  - Broken Record: Repeat your decision/point.
- ▶ Exercise politeness:
  - Recognize their need for positive comments.
  - Recognize their potential defensiveness; "I'm so sorry to bother you but....."

## 2. HELPFUL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS *(Continued)*

- ▶ Initiate a meeting with a problem person.
  - ▶ Ask them for their suggestions as to how to solve the problem; Be open to their feedback
  - ▶ Don't guess motives/make attributions
  - ▶ Follow the Assertive Bill of Rights
  - ▶ Accept that you will not always make everyone happy.
- 

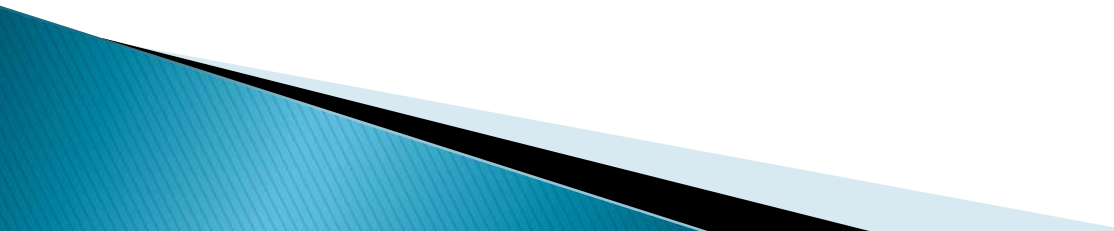
# Helpful Communication Behaviors cont.

- ▶ Monitor your nonverbal; Speak slowly and calmly
  - ▶ See if there's anything you can do for them even if it doesn't meet their full needs
  - ▶ Imagine you were responding in front of your supervisor or the Board of Trustees
- 

# 3. WHO OWNS THE PROBLEM?

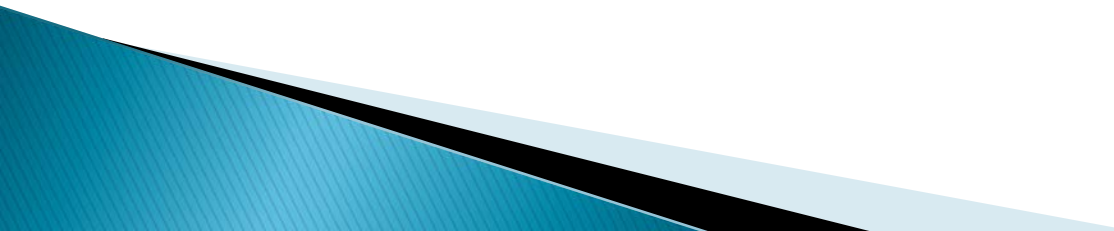
The person who is unhappy owns the problem and is responsible for solving it.

This will help you to stay out of other people's business and help you deal with people who are interfering with yours.

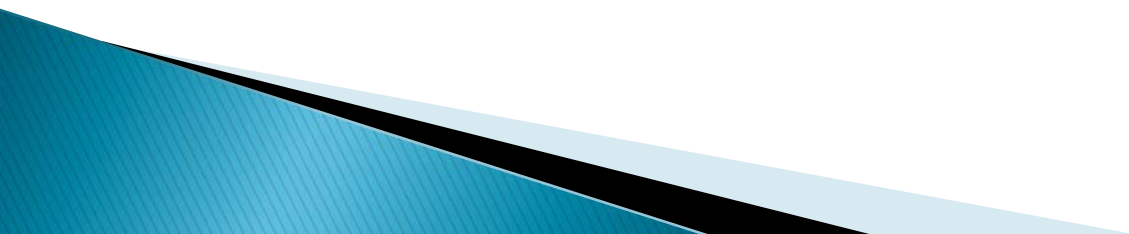




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# VI. Understanding Gender and Intercultural Differences in Communication



# RECOGNIZE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Men interrupt more frequently
- ▶ Men talk more often and longer
- ▶ Women ask more questions/use more qualifiers/use tag questions
- ▶ Women don't talk about their results
- ▶ Women should talk less about the problem and more about the solutions (Rapport vs. Report talk)  
(Eakins/Eakins)

# Characteristics of Intercultural Communication

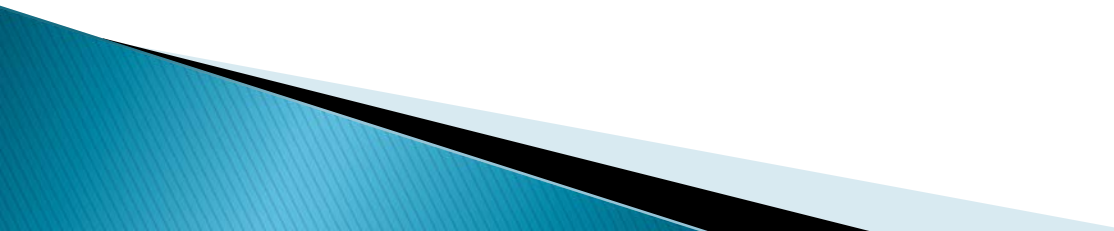
## ▶ Individualistic cultures

- Value self
- Value competition
- U.S., Australia, Great Britain, Canada

## Collectivist Cultures:

- Value group interests
- Harmony & cooperation
- South & Central America, Southeast Asia, Malta

# Barriers to Intercultural Communication

- ▶ Assuming a similarity or difference
  - ▶ Ethnocentrism: The belief that your culture is superior to others
  - ▶ Stereotypes and prejudice
  - ▶ Incompatible norms and values
- 

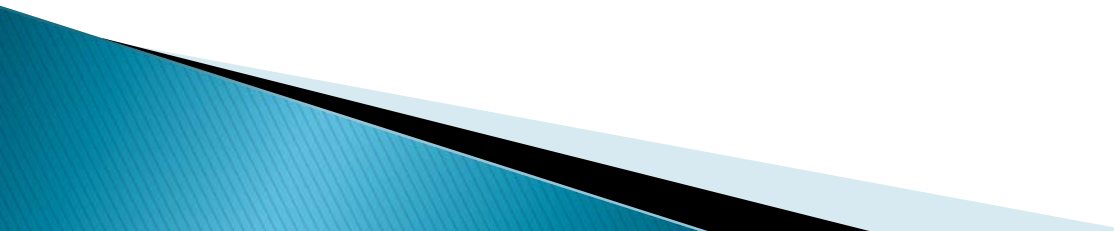
# Improving Intercultural Communication

- ▶ Tolerate ambiguity and be open minded
- ▶ Seek accurate information
- ▶ Practice intercultural empathy
- ▶ Develop flexibility

Source: COMMUNICATE by Verderber & Verderber



# Discussion Questions

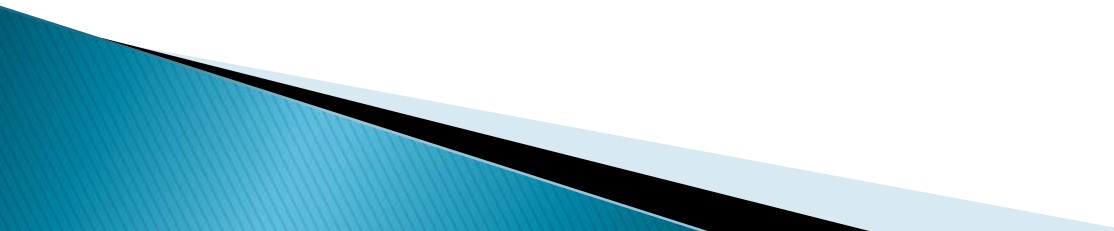
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# VII. Making Meetings Work

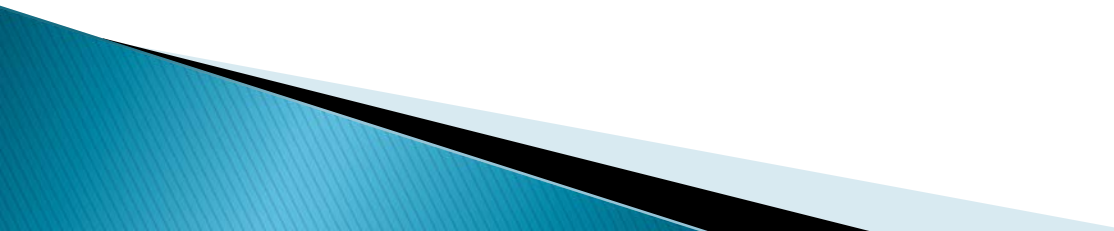
## Shared Leadership

- ▶ Task roles
  - Information or opinion givers
  - Information or opinion seekers
  - Information or opinion analyzers
  
- Maintenance roles
  - Supporters
  - Interpreters
  - Harmonizers
  - Tension relievers (Jokers!)

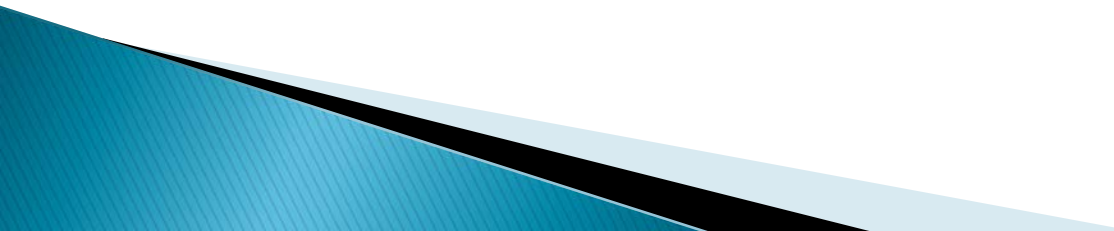


- ▶ Procedural roles
    - Expeditors
    - Gatekeepers
    - Recorders
- 

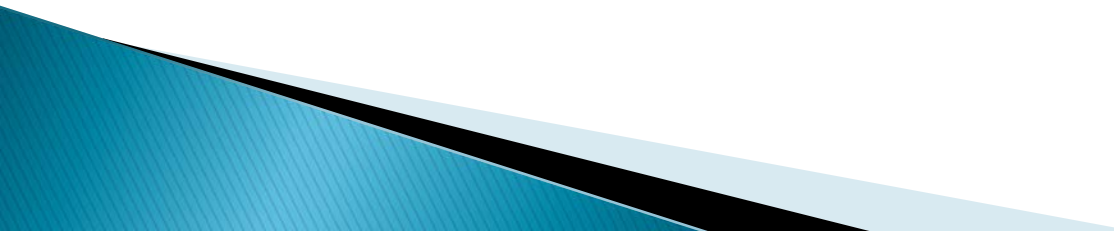
# Communication Guidelines

- ▶ Listen actively
  - ▶ Ask questions when you don't understand
  - ▶ Paraphrase when appropriate
  - ▶ Don't monopolize the meeting/Don't interrupt
  - ▶ Share your ideas
  - ▶ Keep your comments on topic
  - ▶ Focus on the issue, not personal attacks
  - ▶ Give compliments
  - ▶ Focus on consensus/win-win solutions
- 

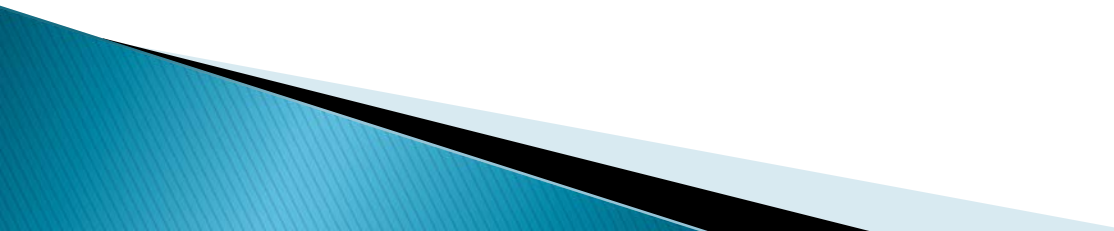
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- 

# MY FINAL ADVICE!!

- ▶ Hear Different Perspectives: Increase “upward communication.”
  - ▶ Improve “downward communication.” Get out of your office.
  - ▶ Keep conversations confidential.
  - ▶ Likeability/charisma are important – Smile!!!
- 

# Communication Tips to Remember!

1. Listen! Listen! Listen!
  2. Offer criticism carefully
  3. Recognize that perceptions matter
  4. Be the better person
  5. Be open to the feedback of others and be willing to change your ways
- 

**It's not rocket science—it's more important than that!!**

**AND it's effective in the workplace, at home, and in all different kinds of relationships**

**But, it only helps if you use it!!**

