

LESSON-29

SELF-CONFIDENCE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Self-confidence is an essential interpersonal variable *for* effective communication. The literary meaning of the word “self-confidence” is trust or belief in one’s confidence. It is a belief and faith in one’s own ability to speak. The manager when he is communicating a piece of information gives in the belief that he is transmitting messages in such a way that the receiver receives it and understands the message. In other words, the communicator must have a great deal of trust in oneself or in one’s own power of communication. Oral communication is more than a physical process. It has also psychological aspects like establishing justification, developing confidence, etc.

Self-confidence is one thing to speak about the message and quite another thing to have confidence and preserve the same throughout the communication process with the greatest of vigilance and care. One has to be self-trusted and strong mind to exchange one’s message in an understandable manner. There are so many temptations around us and it is always possible that the cares and worries of the organizational problems continuously a person and haunts, opportunities go astray.

It is, therefore, far simpler to follow a crooked way than stay assiduously in the right course. The weak and the vacillating will hardly make the grade of the man with a *good* conduct as they are to fall victims to some alluring situations. The weakminded managers are generally dazzled by the glamour and color of experience tasks. In course of time, however, the inevitable is bound to happen and the weak people become converted to the ways of their experienced comparisons.

Self-confidence is the most important characteristic as an essential interpersonal variable for effective communication. Mental qualities find their highest manifestation in self-confidence. With trust and belief a person can communicate more effectively. The old proverb says, “where there is a will, there is a way.” Similarly, where there is self-confidence, there would be good communication. It is an art and craft which can be perfected by experience and practice but cannot be fully taught.

The process of building up of self-confidence consists efforts of mental exercise and situation dealings that have to be undergone before a person may hope to acquire the full control over his self or over his will. If the self and the will are strong fanned by the desired goals, the way is generally open to him, the way of all the tenacity and perseverance that a person has. It is, therefore, not easy to have a determined belief or trust outright. One has to experience in various interpersonal situations of communication and work for it with all efforts availing opportunities and one has to develop and grow self-confidence gradually and steadily. Analysis of interpersonal communication situations reveals that one good interaction everyday adds to his self-confidence as one every work will eat into it and hamper its development.

It is not always easy to cultivate one’s self-confidence without proper feedback. Managers just occupying positions or beginners may have temperamental capabilities and in these formative periods of interactions, one can make or unmake one’s self-confidence. Experience, practical situations are not yet fully set and there is enormous scope for improvement of self-confidence.

One has to develop justifiable self-confidence for this purpose. M.P. Wolf etc. have suggested maintaining a personal achievement journal. They suggested recording particulars of success, failures, experiences which can help to “learn, improve and achieve. “From those summaries, write quarterly and yearly accounting for yourself. By reviewing your achievement journal, you will give yourself an ongoing personal inventory of self-insight, performance, and future direction. You will have relevant data for documenting the development of your career. And you will have a communication aid for constantly developing justifiable confidence in yourself.”

A communicator cannot establish self-confidence and rise to the occasion all of a sudden. The speakers are otherwise the first to rehearse. M.P. Wolf and others, have suggested the following fundamental steps for self-confidence:

- (1) First rehearse alone; and
- (2) Rehearse in front of try-out group.

Self-confidence is related to interpersonal communication. One can experience trust when his relationship with another person is characterized by various situational contexts. According to Rossiter and Pearce, the following are such situational contexts:

- (1) Contingency.
- (2) Predictability.
- (3) Alternative Options.

(1) *Contingency*: “Contingency” means a situation in which the results of another person’s actions significantly affect.

(2) *Predictability*: “Predictability” means the degree of confidence that one may have in his expectations about the other person’s behavior or intentions.

Establishing self-confidence neither happens by magic nor there is technical, manual or readymade guide which specifies the steps to be followed to make self-confidence. In fact there is no sure way to make self-confidence. Developing self-confidence sometimes encourages to convince others in interpersonal communication. This, trusting one’s own strength, however, almost always will make others to distrust the speaker.

Another technique for building goodwill among an audience is to make the listeners to feel important. Due importance should be given to the listeners. The purpose of speech is to make them to understand the message. This can be achieved by showing appreciation for listeners and by taking a personal interest in listening to them and clarifying their doubts. It is an art and tact of the speaker to make them feel important. Speaking from their point of view and mentioning of various practical instances also make them feel important.

Goodwill is friendly and kindly attitude. Listeners’ goodwill is a major object of oral communication. Indicating acceptance of suggestions by the listeners will go a long way towards achieving a successful speech. Indicating attention and acknowledgement of what is being suggested will produce positive and favorable reaction from listeners. It will create a friendly confident feeling towards the communicator. Much of interpersonal communication depends on how one is definite in dealing with a situation.

One must appraise his interaction with others’ in terms of his self-esteem. One of the most dangerous barriers for interpersonal effective communication is lack of self-confidence. Unless a person has self-confidence, he cannot transmit his achievement, his personal abilities, and his future prospects. The communicator indispensably has to build

and develop in himself a justifiable confidence. The exhibition of feelings of anxiety and problems by facial expression are indications of lack of or low self-confidence. A person who is closely associated with the qualities of low self-confidence is unable to communicate and put across to quite different cross-sections of people and in different situations. In real life situations, communicators feel it is difficult to face different faces of audience.

Every person communicating has to endeavor to overcome stage fright. Stage fright is a misdirected awareness on the part of the communicator. When the sender of a message or speaker lacks self-confidence, one may sense nervousness, a tensing of muscles, a quivering voice, etc. In any case, self-confidence is more important which creates a positive outlook in the person.

A successful manager always endeavors to establish self-confidence among the subordinates. Stanley Coppersmith has suggested three conditions relating to self-confidence. They are:

- (1) Managers have to make total acceptance of his subordinates.
- (2) To have clearly defined and enforced limits.
- (3) To have managerial respect for individual action within the defined limits.

It is the motivation and encouragement of his subordinates which promotes free flow of communication within the organization in turn building up a right self-confidence among the people working in the organization. This not only establishes good formal relations but also informal relationships which are conducive to effective communication.

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Leland Brown has suggested the following eight steps. If followed logically, one can achieve self-confidence:

- (1) Message preparation. A void forgetfulness, which results in stage fright.
- (2) Practise aloud, rehearse more times, imagine audience.
- (3) To hear one's own voice by tape recorder. Not to memorize talk.
- (4) Appropriate dress and appearance for the occasion.
- (5) Think about your audience, but not about yourself.
- (6) Begin slowly; stage fright disappears after starting.
- (7) Speak louder than ordinarily.
- (8) Speak as often as you can. The more the practice, the easier it is to speak with confidence.

Some people hold the belief that you can be a good speaker if you just believe in yourself and mentally prepare yourself beforehand. This theory states that confidence and poise are just a matter of will power. But, in fact, confidence and poise are two things, which are the result of painstaking and conscious efforts made to harness such skills. For example, it is impossible for you to drive your car in heavy city traffic, just on the basis of your confidence and without having any previous training or experience of driving. Obviously, in the absence of such training you are bound to hurt others or get hurt yourself. Therefore, wisdom demands that you pick up the driving skills slowly and systematically through training. Similarly, the moment you venture out for a public speaking or presentation without possessing the requisite skills, howsoever hard you may

try to convince yourself that you can speak well in public without training, you are sure to find your throat dry, your heart beating fast and your memory deserting you even at the cost of your effort.

A systematic self-training will make you learn how to control physical nervousness and how to make positive use of the underlying pressure within your body that cause such symptoms. For example, a heartbeat that is faster than the usual can be a sign of fear, but when it is kept under control, the same faster heartbeat can convert into energy, enthusiasm, vitality and drive you to deliver and invigorating and enthusiastic speech.

Thus, presenting skills are necessary, and the development of those skills requires systematic training. Following are the skills that can be acquired for effective speaking in public:

Type of Skill: Skill Attributes

Imagination This shall enable you to imagine, conceive, invent, dream up, create and visualize sequences as you develop a story. You will learn to give talks without relying so completely on reading from your notes.

Vocal You will learn how to keep under control oral, spoken, uttered and eloquent words and vocal cords properly relaxed so that the voice is projected without any distortion.

Body awareness Self-awareness of perception, consciousness, sensibility of your own body shall reassure you about your physical presence so that you become the centre of attention as well as attraction for your audience.

Practising With this you can get over your old habit of cramming by way of mechanical memorization and instead making habit of using of creative thinking, methods, systems and procedures with an understanding.

Emotional control You will be able to control feelings, sentiments and reduce anxiety, panic and fear;

Feedback You will be able to respond clearly and comfortably to questions, interruptions, distractions and unforesee happenings.

Warmth You will be relaxed enough to be able to communicate qualities of humour, concern and sincerity.

Devotion You will be able to project an image of assurance and credibility and high degree of acceptability through dedication and commitment.

Self-control And Resistance Being in control shall enable you to check your involuntary movements such as excessive hand gesturing, shifting from one foot to another, swaying, head ducking and trembling and develop the ability to recognize and resist the impulse to rush ahead, instead of pacing yourself with control and awareness.

Type of Skill Skill Attributes

Coordination This shall facilitate you to organize, systematize, arrange, match and move easily using expressive gestures and coordinating with the audience.

Attention Developing the skill of being attentive, alertness, awareness and deliberations shall enable you to shut out negative thoughts from your mind and the negative effect coming from the participants.

Concentration Your ability of concentration, application, focus, convergence, intensification will allow you to have complete command over your thinking faculties, memory and imagination and match with your presentation.