Communication Roadblocks

Although most people believe that listening is important for clear communication, many people do things which inhibit effective listening.

# The Twelve “Roadblocks” To Good Communication:[[1]](#endnote-1)

## Ordering. Directing. Commanding:

* + “You must…,”
  + “You are not allowed…”

## Warning. Admonishing. Threatening:

* + “If you do that, then…,”
  + “You shouldn’t do that…”

## Moralizing. Preaching. Imploring:

* + “If you want to do the right thing…,”
  + “Please don’t do that…”

## Advising. Giving suggestions or solutions:

* + “If I were you…,”
  + “May I suggest…”

## Persuading with logic. Lecturing. Arguing:

* + “Let’s look at the date…,”
  + “The right way to do this is…”

## Judging. Criticizing. Disagreeing. Blaming:

* + “That’s a dumb move…,”
  + “I strongly disagree.”

## Praising. Agreeing. Evaluating positively. Buttering up:

* + “What a great idea…,”
  + “Now aren’t you creative?”

## Name-calling. Ridiculing. Shaming:

* + “You should be ashamed of yourself for…,”
  + “You blew it”

## Interpreting. Analyzing. Diagnosing:

* + “What they meant to say was ....,"
  + “You are just frustrated…”

## Reassuring. Sympathizing. Consoling. Supporting:

* + “It will be all right…,”
  + “Things will change…”

## Probing. Questioning. Interrogating:

* + “Why did you do it?”
  + “Who have you been talking to?”

## Distracting. Diverting:

* + “Let’s not talk about it now…,”
  + “Let’s do something and you’ll forget about it.”

1. Adapted from Thomas Gordon, “Leadership Effectiveness Training.” New York: Wyden, 1977, p. 60-62. For the University of Colorado Boulder Ombuds Office services and information, please call 303-492-5077. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)