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# 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:<sup>i</sup>

### 1. ORDERING. DIRECTING. COMMANDING:

- “You must...,”
- “You are not allowed...”

### 2. WARNING. ADMONISHING. THREATENING:

- “If you do that, then...,”
- “You shouldn’t do that...”

### 3. MORALIZING. PREACHING. IMPLORING:

- “If you want to do the right thing...,”
- “Please don’t do that...”

### 4. ADVISING. GIVING SUGGESTIONS OR SOLUTIONS:

- “If I were you...,”
- “May I suggest...”

### 5. PERSUADING WITH LOGIC. LECTURING. ARGUING:

- “Let’s look at the data...,”
- “The right way to do this is...”

### 6. JUDGING. CRITICIZING. DISAGREEING. BLAMING:

- “That’s a dumb move...,”
- “I strongly disagree.”

### 7. PRAISING. AGREEING. EVALUATING POSITIVELY. BUTTERING UP:

- “What a great idea...,”
- “Now aren’t you creative?”

### 8. NAME-CALLING. RIDICULING. SHAMING:

- “You should be ashamed of yourself for...,”

- “You blew it”
9. INTERPRETING. ANALYZING. DIAGNOSING:
- “What they meant to say was .....,”
  - “You are just frustrated...”
10. REASSURING. SYMPATHIZING. CONSOLING. SUPPORTING:
- “It will be all right...,”
  - “Things will change...”
11. PROBING. QUESTIONING. INTERROGATING:
- “Why did you do it?”
  - “Who have you been talking to?”
12. DISTRACTING. DIVERTING:
- “Let’s not talk about it now...,”
  - “Let’s do something and you’ll forget about it.”

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<sup>i</sup> 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.