
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:ⁱ

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.”

ⁱ Adapted from Thomas Gordon, “Leadership Effectiveness Training.” New York: Wyden, 1977, p. 60-62.
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