



Conscious Communication

In our attempts to understand the sources of the stress we feel in day-to-day life, it is important to explore how awareness of our language can be an important tool in managing miscommunication. Happiness is not merely controlled by external factors. The closer we come to self-responsibility, the more control we gain over our lives. By becoming aware of the language we use to express ourselves, we can learn self-responsibility and harvest the rewards of honesty, sincerity, and open-heartedness between ourselves and others.

True communication implies that we want to share a part of ourselves. The conscious use of language helps us take responsibility for how we feel. By using conscious language, we begin to learn about ourselves rather than blaming others or the circumstances. The clarity we experience when we use this method of self-awareness helps us better understand not only ourselves, but also the needs and feelings of others. Listening for the “I” statement behind another’s words can give you insight into how to be an empathetic listener.

Using “I” Statements to Awaken Creative Force

Using “we” rather than “I” can place responsibility and project your own power of creativity on someone or something other than yourself.

- “We should fix dinner” versus “I feel hungry and I want us to fix dinner.”
- “It’s strange talking to you” versus “I feel strange talking to you.”
- “People feel nervous in new situations” versus “I feel nervous in new situations.”

Step one: Co-Listening

In co-listening, one person listens while the other person speaks. During this process, the listener practices listening without any reply or response, their attention is fully on the speaker. The listener practices nonjudgmental awareness, or witness consciousness, for the speaker and self. It is natural for attention to travel to other thoughts or an internal commentary about what is being heard. When this occurs, the listener simply draws his or her attention back to the speaker’s voice. There is no processing, interpreting, problem solving, analyzing, helping, or discussing during or after the co-listening process by either partner. The speaker notices what it is like to be listened to, without nonverbal communications or cues. When the designated time is up for the speaker, the partners reverse roles.

Step two: Reflective Listening

One person speaks while the other listens. When the speaker is done (either a designated time has been set or the speaker finishes speaking), the listener repeats back to the speaker what they heard them say. The speaker then lets the listener know if there was anything they felt was not heard or acknowledged, or was misheard. When this process is complete, the roles are reversed.