

## SKILLFUL COMMUNICATION

*Communication is the process of creating mutual understanding between and among all parties involved.*

We can communicate through many means:

- Verbal and written language, signs, and symbols
- Hand signals and gestures
- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Sighs and grunts and growls
- Body language

When you're involved in a conversation or dialogue where all involved can openly, freely, and without fear of judgment or criticism share their thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and feelings, you recognize that as a good conversation. You feel heard and valued as you share. You feel connected as you listen to others. You go away feeling enriched and content and pleased with your relationships with these people. It is through communication with others that we build happy relationships, caring communities, and progressive, successful societies.

Communication is the foundation of good, healthy, happy relationships. It has several different parts that together send your messages to others:

1. the words you use
2. the tone, volume, and speed you use
3. the body language you demonstrate

Situation: you did not do your homework last night. You come in to the classroom for today's class and the teacher asks for your homework. With a partner, you'll say the phrase "I don't have my homework. I didn't do it." along with the 6 different body postures and tones and volumes of voice below. What message is conveyed with each of the 6 postures?

1. Arms crossed over your chest, chin lifted, voice loud.

2. Turning away from the teacher, muttering under your voice.

3. Nervously looking through your backpack, frowning.

4. Head up, direct eye contact with the teacher, steady, calm, and quiet voice.

5. Hands on hips, leaning forward, eyes squinting, talking through clenched teeth.

6. Shrugging shoulders, using the phrase as a question.

What attitude does each of these messages communicate to your teacher?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_



Which one feels most natural to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think that is?

\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluate your communication skills:

