

In the first lesson we defined leadership as the ability to influence change. In order to do this, a great leader needs to be able to communicate effectively.

1. First the actual message, idea, or information needs to be communicated clearly. The message must be easily understood and it must be of value or is helpful. Strive for concise, accurate, and timely information to your members
2. The form of communication can be different. It could be face to face, telephone, email, fax, or a hand out. The Method of delivery should be suitable for the message.
3. At times you will want to follow up on your communications, providing more information or answering questions.

Virtual Communications presents challenges. When you communicate via email or phone, you need to take care of overtones, especially in email. Avoid USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or exclamation marks!!!! The reader might misunderstand your emphasis. Also, check for grammar and spelling errors and avoid slang or abbreviations.

Do you know the essential aspect of communicating effectively is listening effectively? When you listen you can:

- Uncover more vital information
- Clarify ideas and minimize confusion
- Build rapport
- Confirm your understanding

To be a good listener, you have to want to be one. The main reason we communicate is to share our knowledge with others. No one likes to be interrupted or ignored—it makes them feel as if what they have to say is unimportant.

Please review these “listening tips”

1. Stop talking! You cannot listen if you are talking
2. Help the one who is talking to feel comfortable and at ease.
3. Show the “talker” that you are interested in what they are saying.
4. Remove distractions and give the talker your full attention.
5. Be patient and allow sufficient time. Do not look at your watch.
6. Do not interrupt.
7. If necessary put yourself in the “talkers” shoes by showing empathy.
8. Ask questions

Becoming a better listener will make you a more patient person and will enhance the quality of your relationships. Everyone loves to talk to someone who truly listens.

Great listeners make great leaders.