

PARAPHRASING

DEFINITION: The skill of responding to the content and meaning of another person's verbal communication. It identifies with the words by clarifying the content for accuracy.

Paraphrasing is the first of the communication skills we will be practicing. The purposes of paraphrasing are:

- 1) To acknowledge that you have heard the other person through the content of their words.
- 2) To respond to the meaning of the other's verbal message. It *is* letting the other person know what his/her statements mean to you. It deals primarily with the content of what the other is saying .facts, ideas, questions, and so forth, "Do you mean...
"Is this ... (statement) an accurate understanding of your ideas?"

Paraphrasing thus does three things:

- 1) Most importantly, it affirms to the speaker that you are listening. They are being heard.
- 2) It increases accuracy between you and the other person and therefore produces a degree of mutual or shared understanding.
- 3) The act of paraphrasing conveys feelings of caring, i.e. it demonstrates in a behaviour that you are interested in him/her because you are concerned in how he/she views their problem or other subject matter.

EXAMPLES:

1. A committee member says, "I have tried five times to get my idea across to Bill, but every time I try to tell him, he cuts me off"

Paraphrase checking out the content for accuracy: "You are saying that after trying many times to share with Bill, he cuts me off."

2, A member of a task force states that "We have been having a lot of difficulty keeping the members we take in. Last year we added 16 to the club, but when I checked the records, I found that only four are still attending the organisation".

Paraphrase-accuracy: "If I hear you correctly, you are saying that only four out of 16 persons who joined us in the last year are still attending meetings and that leads you to believe that we are having difficulty retaining members?"

NOW YOU TRY IT.

A person says, "I am not sure that any program we develop will be of value to us until we get a new President. The President we have now has lost a lot of his drive and I think it is time for a change."

A paraphrase typically explains or clarifies the text that is being paraphrased.

It: - Does not match the source word for word

Involves putting a passage from a source into your own words

Changes the words or phrasing of a passage, but retains and fully communicates the original meaning

Must be attributed to the original source.

When paraphrasing, it is important to keep the original meaning and to present it in a new form.

Here are some sentences that have been paraphrased:

Original: Her life spanned years of incredible change for women.

Paraphrase: Mary lived through an era of liberating reform for women.

Original: Any trip to Italy should include a visit to Tuscany to sample their exquisite wines.

Paraphrase: Be sure to include a Tuscan wine-tasting experience when visiting Italy.

To paraphrase, the listener chooses the most important details of what the other person has just said and reflects them back to them. Paraphrases can be just a few words or one or two brief sentences.

Paraphrasing is not a matter of simply repeating or parroting what the other person has stated. Rather it is capturing the essence of what they are saying, through rephrasing. When the listener has captured what the other person is saying, often they will say, "That's right" or offer some other form of confirmation.

Example: I have just broken up with Jason. The way he was treating me was just too much to bear. Every time I tried to touch on the subject with him he would just clam up. I feel so much better now.

Paraphrase: You feel much better after breaking up with Jason.

Paraphrasing is an extremely useful tool to use when someone, criticizes, blames or confronts you. However, these are also situations that can get emotional very quickly and turn into confrontations, arguments etc. Because of this, it is useful to practice our paraphrasing in our minds in a neutral situation and in our own time and develop it as an alternative pattern to those we have used previously that have not given us the outcome we would have preferred. The use of paraphrasing has the potential to save many relationships because it gives the opportunity to reflect feelings and clarify exactly what we are hearing. Paraphrasing also allows each participant in the conversation to feel some ownership of it and that is important because neither feel they are being controlled. In fact, paraphrasing really does mean that the person using it is very much in control of themselves and doesn't let them get drawn into the other persons world if they don't want to be. It also encourages the other person to take responsibility for what they say.

Example:

Person 1. You can't do it like that. It won't work. Anyone can see that.

Person 2. So what **you** are saying is that if I do it like that it won't work?

(What you are doing here is giving back the criticism to the person he stated it. The focus is on the "you").

Person 1. No, anyone could see that. This is how it should be done.

Person 2. **You** are saying that anyone should be able to see that it should be done **your** way. Is that right?

(This is asking for clarification as to how it show be done).

Person 1. Yes. You have to do that before you do anything else.

Person 2. So **you** feel that is the best way to do it and I was wondering what would happen if **it** was done like this?

(Make a general optional suggestion without focusing on what would happen if "it" was done this rather than saying what would happen if the other person specifically did it. By generalizing, you are keeping the individuality out of it).

Communication with children

The following are a couple of choices when communicating with children.

Use the following when children are not doing tasks that you are asking them to do, especially around the house. Rather than just focus on one specific task that you want them to do, say, tidy up their room, combine it with one of their other tasks. This gives them choice as well as teaching them to make decisions and take responsibility.

Example: Would you rather tidy up your room before you do the dishes or would you like to do the dishes first?

Another time when a parent or carer/teacher can get very frustrated with a child is when they do something wrong or make a mistake with something that we think they should usually be able to do or know.

Example: So if there was another way to do that, what do you think that would be?
If you could do that another way, how would you do it.
If there was an even better way to do that, what do you think that would be?
How many other ways do you think you could do that?

Reflecting and Paraphrasing

Part of the ‘art of listening’ is making sure that the **person knows their story is being listened to**. This is achieved by the listener repeating back to the speaker parts of their story, this is known as Paraphrasing.

Reflecting is showing the person that you have not only ‘heard’ what is being said but what feelings and emotions they are experiencing when sharing their story with you.

This is sometimes known as the **music behind the words**.

It is like holding up a mirror to the speaker, repeating what they have said, shows them they have your full attention. It also allows them to make sure you fully understood them and if not, they can correct you.

Reflecting and Paraphrasing should not only contain what is being said but what **emotion or feeling the person is expressing**.

Paraphrasing is when you, the listener, restate succinctly and tentatively what the speaker said - conveying empathy, acceptance and genuineness. Since we cannot read the speaker’s mind and we’ve been given a lot of extraneous material, it’s good to learn how to rephrase briefly and acknowledge that this is what we think they have said.

For example, let’s say the speaker has gone into a lot of detail about a traffic jam and the effect on his blood pressure and his resulting visit with the doctor and the rude nurse and, and and... To paraphrase would be to say in a tentative voice, “So after the traffic jam you felt your blood pressure was up, and the doctor confirmed this...?”

By doing this, you are letting the speaker know that you understand and, if you don’t, are willing to be corrected. AND you are helping her or him to “cut to the chase.” What would not be helpful to say right now is, “So you have an anger management problem!?” It may be what you are thinking, but you want them to keep talking and for them to come to that conclusion on her or his own.

By the way, this is a good time to take interest in the **tone** of your voice. Be watchful of whether it is...

- High / low
- Loud / soft
- Fast / slow
- Accommodating / demanding
- Light-hearted / gloomy

Maintain moderation in all things including voice. And remember, the person may not remember what was said, but they will remember how you made them feel!

STEMS FOR PERCEPTION CHECKING

1. I get the impression ...
2. I'm wondering if ...
3. It seems to me that ...
4. It sound to me as if ...
5. I have a hunch that ...
6. It appears to me that ...
7. Is it possible that you might be feeling ...
8. I sense that we might have caused you to feel ...
9. I perceive that your experience may have been ...
10. I get the feeling that you are experiencing ...
11. Could it be that you are feeling ...

The following is a brief dialogue using perception checks:

Bill: "I'm not sure that having a membership drive in our club will be of any help. We have had other programs before but it has not been of any value."

John: "It sounds as if your experience in the past has made you feel a bit wary about the value of a membership drive. Am I right?" (*A good perception check is always done with a neutral tone of voice.*)

Bill: "Yes, you are right. We have tried so many different things in the past and we never seem to get anywhere. We have a new dynamic president but that does not seem to make any difference."

John: "Bill, I'm wondering if you're not feeling a lot of discouragement at this time. Would I be right?"

**PERCEPTION CHECKS ARE RARELY USED IN ISOLATION FROM OTHER
FORMS OF LISTENING.**

The above illustration uses them in isolation for purpose of illustration.

BASIC COMMUNICATION RULES

- 1 **SAY "I":** when you are expressing something that you think or feel or have done instead of using words like "you", "they", "people". Own your communication.
- 2 **DON'T RESCUE:** This is doing something for someone that she/he will not do for themselves. This is a discount of someone else by your acting as if they cannot act on their own behalf.
- 3 **AVOID INTERPRETATION:** An interpretation is when you tell another what motivates them, why they feel angry or think or feel the way they do ie. "You are a very angry person". The main reason for this not being an appropriate communication form is the response to this will be the other person's defensiveness.
- 4 **NOTE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS:** We often confuse the two in language ie. "I feel you are wrong about this" is actually a thought not a feeling. Only use "I feel" when expressing feelings (anger, sadness, fear, happiness...) and "I think" with a thought.
- 5 **CLARIFICATION:** other people's misstatements. This is a sign of caring. When you ignore or go along with someone's game playing, discounting etc you are "buying in" as well as hurting the person and acting as if you do not care. You can confront with care without attacking the person.
- 6 **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY:** for how **YOU** feel, think and behave. Don't say "**YOU** make me angry", because that makes someone else responsible for your feelings/ behaviours. State clearly your feelings and your response to the issue. "I feel angry when 'x' happens because"
- 7 **ASK QUESTIONS:** that give you information to assist in what you need to know. Often questions are used as an indirect way of making a statement or a way of shifting responsibility to another person.
- 8 **AVOID DISCOUNTING:** which is acting as if what you think or feel is more important than what the other person thinks or feels, or denigrating yourself and acting as if the other person is more important than you.

Examples of Discounting:

- a) Interrupting - discounting the person who is speaking.
- b) Withdrawal - not speaking for fear of being thought of or sounding stupid. This is self discounting.
- c) Disregarding - not taking the other's desire into account.
- d) Saying things that put yourself or others down.

BASIC COMMUNICATION RULES (continued)

- 9 **AVOID EXAGGERATIONS:** or exaggerated words in a generalised context such as "always", "never", "incredible", "the most", "all people". This is a way of justifying your ineffectiveness, avoiding a problem, or avoiding responsibility for your behaviour.

- 10 **AVOID QUALIFYING STATEMENTS:** or phrases such as "perhaps", "maybe" unless you are really unsure. Such words are often a way of avoiding responsibility for what you say. "Try" is often used as a way of actually saying "I won't" or "I can't". Trying is different from doing.

- 11 **I CAN'T, I HAVE TO:** are best avoided unless physically or emotionally it is really the case. It is rare that we are actually incapable of doing something. What is true, that we choose to act the way we do, and in most cases, due to a fear of discomfort or a concern that it may cause unpleasant consequences.

- 12 **TAKE TIME TO CLARIFY AND THINK ABOUT YOUR POSITION:** Ask yourself what is it I want to achieve? Is this just my issue? What is the "real" issue? Can I separate the two?

- 13 **MAKING VAGUE REQUESTS:** can almost always pre-empt a negative communication issue. People work from their own bias and relevant information structure. When you want something, ask specifically for it.

- 14 **APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT:** and that everyone views the world differently. Even if someone else sounds a bit crazy, they have something to offer and they are just different to you.

- 15 **CHANGES NEVER COME FROM HIT AND RUN TACTICS:** Changes occur slowly especially in close relationships. Be persistent and fair. Stay on track with an issue, don't be into communication just to "get the last word in".

UNHELPFUL HELPING STYLES

The Organiser:

Now first of all you should..... , then you should Have you tried....?

The Smotherer:

Poor baby! How terrible! You poor thing! Never mind - we'll make it better for you.

The Diagnostician:

What's wrong with you is (your mother didn't love you, so you are not able to relate to others).

The Takeover Merchant:

I feel awful for you. I know exactly how you feel. That makes me feel dreadful.

The Expert:

Yes, I've had this problem (or met this problem before) so I can tell you what you should do.

The "Star":

Wants to be admired for their ability. More interested in the effect they are having on the client.

The Duty Officer:

It is our duty to help one another. I've got so much time on my hands I should use it constructively.

The Conscience Helper:

I've been so lucky so I should help others to show how grateful I am. I've been so bad in my life, I should make reparation.

The Judge:

That was a silly thing to do. That was the right thing to do. You really shouldn't do that sort of thing. Don't think like that.

The Evangeliser:

"If you read your Bible you will find all the answers there", or, "God loves you".

The Controller:

Now tell me about ...(taking client into direction we feel comfortable with). Cutting in on what client is saying, etc.

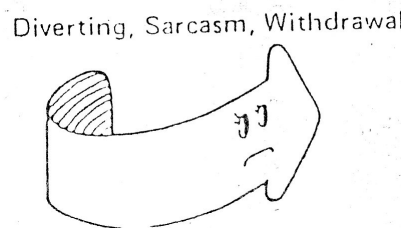
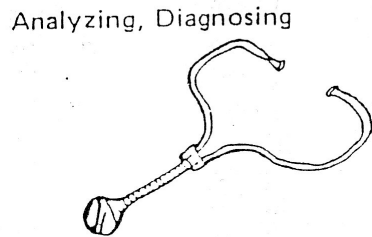
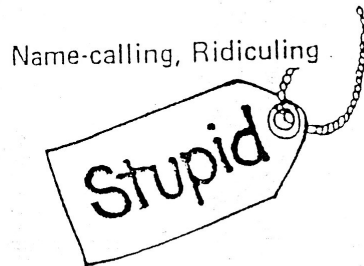
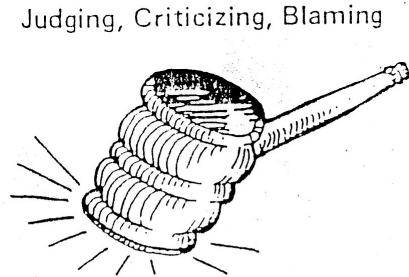
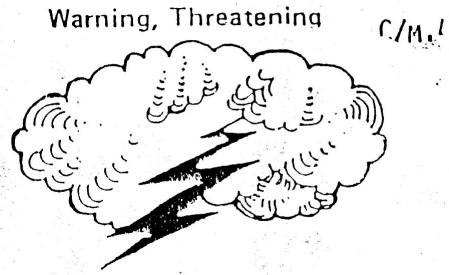
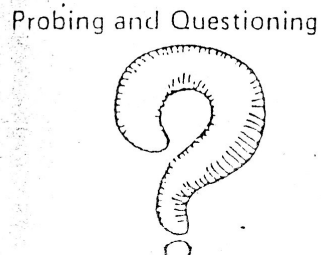
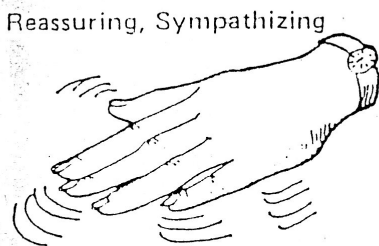
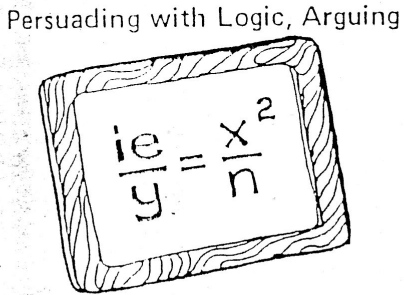
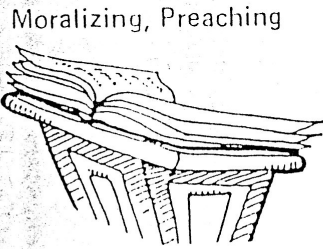
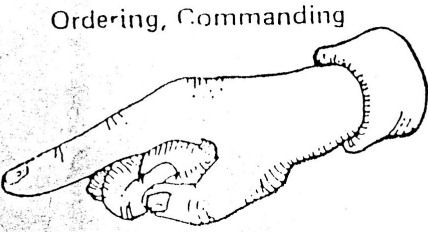
The Voyeur:

Enjoys hearing secrets - especially those relating to the less acceptable aspects or "juicy" side of lives of others - for the shock value. "If people in this town knew all the things I know about what goes on."

The Denyer:

It's not really all that bad!

ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION



RESPONDING TO RESISTANCE FROM OTHERS

When faced with a statement that has potential to create conflict, ask open questions to reframe resistance. Explore the difficulties and then re-direct discussion to focus on positive possibilities.

EXPLORE

Clarify Details

It's too expensive

Compared to what?

Too many/much/little/few

Compared to what?

I want the best

What would be best for you?

Find Options

You can't do that around here

What would happen if we did?

He/she would never ...

How can we find ways for it to happen?

They always ...

Are there any times they don't?

We've tried that already

What was the outcome?

This is the only way to do it

Yes, that's an option. What else could we consider?

REDIRECT

Move to the Positive

It will never work

What would it take to make it work?

I won't

What would make you willing?

It's a failure

How could it work?

It's disastrous

What would make it better?

He's/she's useless

What is he/she doing that *is* acceptable?

It's impossible

What would it take to make it possible?

I can't

You can't see a way to do it at the moment?

I don't want to

What would you like?

Go Back to Legitimate Needs and Concerns

He's/she's a hopeless case

It's hard to see how to work with him/her?

You fool (and other insults)

What do we need to do to sort this out?

How dare you do such a thing

What do you dislike about it?

It should be done my way

What makes that seem the best option?

His/her place is a pig sty

He/she puts a different emphasis on tidiness to you?

He/she doesn't do their fair share

Where do you think his/her priorities may lie?

LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES.

What will it be like when you have made the changes – now – in the future – as you look back and see what it was like to have had that problem – as you think about it now, here, sitting in this room?

If you could make this change for yourself – so that you could stop that old behaviour you used to do – having already made the change, (quickly and elegantly) and see yourself as you are – now - do you like what you see?

How long will it take you to remember now?

I would like to suggest that you – now – consider making this change (doing this thing) in a more updated (more useful, positive etc.) form.

How do you think you look when you feel competent, confident?

People usually talk about what they don't have rather than what they already have – they only notice what is missing.

Learn how to drive your own bus – you can learn how to run your brain – teach it new patterns.

Why be average when you can be much better than average?

See the you for whom this isn't a problem.

The problem is the problem, not the person.

As you look at that you who has more abilities, and no longer has that problem, do you mind if you end up being that person?

How will this new you behave with family, work, play, friends?

As you observe that person, is there anything that you see hear or feel that alerts you to any possible problems.

Change the limiting sub modalities in the images to make it better – make it real.

For the world to change, first I must change.

If you can change your mind, you can change the/your world.

There is no such thing as failure, only feedback – no mistakes, only outcomes.

People have all the resources to change – ask yourself.

This is the you who has the ability to notice when and where it will be useful to utilise these new choices and when and where it may be more useful to continue to use old behaviours.

For someone to say they are not ready to change is an excuse – our role is to get them ready to change – and they may change themselves anyway.

Listen to the voice? If that voice was a picture what would it look like?

If you made this change, how would you see yourself differently?

Brains don't learn to get results – they learn to go in directions.

How do you plan to not succeed, be depressed, be anxious etc. ??????????????????????????????

If what you are doing is not working, change it.

The LBW mantra – I am Lovable Beautiful and Worthwhile in all that I do

today/now/tomorrow