Guidance Note Series 7

Developing communication skills

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We continue this week with more ways to take forward and sustain conversation. This is the seventh instalment of the Guidance Note Series on "Developing Communication Skills".

Introduction

To be a good communicator, the critical success factor is that you have to draw and hold the interest of the person with whom you are in conversation. If you can attain this ability, people would find comfort in conversing with you, and they would seek your company.

How to achieve this skill of being "charming"? There are six elements to build up this ability. And, once you possess the "charming" ability, you are ready to become the person that people want to be around and meet again.

Knowledge

Be conversant with current affairs. It becomes useful to start a conversation, join in or simply sustain chatting. You also need to know of other things that people may be interested in such as sports, films, books and this would be useful to continue or sustain conversation.

Sincerity

Display genuineness in what you say and show interest because you want to hear what the other person is saying. You may not be aware but lack of sincerity is noticed, and that creates an unfavourable impression with the other person. In fact, insincerity is an insult and you should avoid it at all cost.

Eye Contact

You remember that in the first series of the Guidance Note we stressed on eye contact. Meet the eyes of the person you are talking to. Maintain eye contact throughout the conversation and look away at intervals to keep the rapport friendly and comfortable. However, do not look at piercingly as that would make the other person uncomfortable.

Offer of Comfort

Thoughtfulness is a positive attribute that helps the other person feel valued and important. Simple acts of goodwill and kindness are very much appreciated especially when you meet people in an unfamiliar environment. A few simple examples of such acts are offering the other person a seat or a cup of tea or opening or closing a window to make him settle comfortably.

Smile

Smile does not cost money; but it helps to get good response. So, never forget to smile and do not be seriously faced. And to make the smile genuine, smile with the eyes. In other words, your smile should reach the muscle around the eyes.

Listen and Respond

Go back to the discussions in the second series of the Guidance Note where we said that to have effective flow of conversation, it is important that you carefully listen to the person with whom you are conversing. Listening shows you are interested in what the other person has to say. Listen and respond appropriately. Be witty in your response but avoid dry humor because that could put off the other person. And, of course getting a laugh is always good.

Practice - The Next Step

Follow these tips in your communication and you would find that you are actually looking forward to those social events that you used to dread. Once you master communication skills, it is as if the world changes in a heartbeat. Because you would have changed your manner of dealing with others and others would respond differently to you.

It is easier to achieve this skill than you think of. All that you need is determination and practice. Go ahead and practice and you will wonder how something that was once so difficult is now so easy. Hurry up, hurry up, and hurry up.



