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Click to jump to: [Feature](#) [Promotions](#) [Resources](#) [Tip](#) [WhereInTheWorld](#)

a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

The First Class Manager Coach

Communication: The Heart and Soul of Business Life

When you think about it, communication is the foundation for everything we do, both spoken and unspoken, isn't it? We communicate to share feelings, information, opinions, and knowledge. We communicate to begin, nurture, or repair relationships. We communicate to deliver expectations, share a vision, and influence decisions. We communicate to resolve conflict, move plans forward, and evaluate progress. We communicate to lead people through change, inspire staff to greatness, and celebrate success. In fact, I can't think of any time during our waking hours when we aren't communicating something to somebody.

Do you ever stop to consider **WHAT** you are communicating and **HOW** you are doing it? Frequently, we *think* we are communicating one thing when, actually, we are communicating another. It's not unusual for us to *assume* we are communicating a certain way when we are really communicating quite differently than we imagine. We say or do something, and then people interpret it as we never intended. No wonder we have problems!

Over breakfast a woman told me about an experience she recently had with her supervisor. Obviously frustrated with the direction of a particular

project, this man most likely sought her out to pick her brain about how to proceed. Because he knew she was intimately acquainted with the work, he probably saw her as a good person to dissect the issue. As it turned out, she could barely focus on the conversation as she absorbed his strident tone, observed his wagging pointer finger, and watched him rock back and forth on his heels. The constructive input she normally would have offered flew right out of her head. Completely distracted by his voice and body, she shut down. A few minutes into this, her boss looked at her—surprised and confused—and asked why she wasn’t giving him any insight. Obviously, he was clueless about *how* he was communicating his need and frustration.



My feature article below provides a “blueprint” for approaching any kind of conversation. Use it regularly and discover that other people respect you, take you seriously, and respond favorably.

Sylvia

[Back to Top](#)

FEATURE ARTICLE

A No-Fail Communication Blueprint

(one example of how to use it)

1. **Get crystal clear about what you need or want to communicate--and why.**

Clarify an issue in your own head first. Then practice saying something like this to a direct report: “I need to meet with you privately to talk about the costly mistake you made yesterday. While I’m sure you didn’t intend such a negative outcome, it happened. Now there are serious implications for our company that we need to address.”

2. **Connect with how you personally feel about the topic.**

In the situation described above, you may be very angry, highly frustrated, and deeply worried. You have to identify those emotions and let yourself feel them before you confront the employee who made the serious mistake. If you deny, ignore, or minimize them, they may erupt

inappropriately or cause you to get sick over time.

3. Identify the actions or results you desire from other people after you communicate.

Talk with the employee about his responsibility in fixing, working around, or undoing the mistake. Ensure that he knows exactly how he is to proceed to avoid further damage. Also let him know what you will do. Take time to explain how each set of actions supports the other to reach a positive—or at least a neutral-- outcome.

4. Choose your words deliberately and wisely.

Stand tall in your leadership and get to the point using powerful action words. Steer clear of passive, weak, confusing language that leaves the other person uncertain about what you just said. Make requests directly. Share your opinions plainly. Preserve the relationship carefully.

5. Consider your facial expressions and body language.

When discussing difficult subject matter, it's best to maintain a more benign body posture and facial expression. For the person watching you, constantly crossing and uncrossing your legs is distracting. The same is true for tapping your pen on the table or desk. And rolling your eyes is simply rude. Sit up straight in your chair, feet flat on the floor. Lean slightly forward, and relax your mouth.

6. Be conscious of how both genders will hear and interpret your message.

It's a fact that men and women hear and interpret the same communicate differently. In the situation above, make sure a male employee knows you value his professional competence in general despite the mistake. By doing this, he's more likely to cooperate quickly with the process for dealing with the fallout from his error than if you leave him feeling like a total failure. A female employee, on the other hand, may need to be reassured over and over that her relationship with you is not permanently scarred.

7. Assess the message and delivery impact upon your professional image.

By considering your message and the other person's feelings as you communicate it, you can accrue social capital, thus enhancing your professional image. If you truly care about others as well as yourself, you need to address the employee's mistake and its ramifications in a matter-of-fact, reasonable manner. Cutting, critical accusations that shred people's self esteem not only injure them but also render them incapable

of moving forward in the ways you require and desire.

[Back to Top](#)

Offers and Opportunities

COMING SOON

OVERLOADED and OVERWHELMED? 10 STRATEGIES FOR GAINING CONTROL A Workbook

This downloadable product was created as a result of the highly successful July 25, 2012 [teleseminar](#) focusing on the topic of overwhelm and how to deal with it. Currently in the design phase, it will be available within the next few weeks. Watch your inbox for more information.

RESOURCES

Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott is a powerful read filled with real life examples that can literally transform any or all of the conversations you have with bosses, employees, colleagues, stakeholders, volunteers, and family members. This 2002 publication by Viking (a Berkley Book) assumes the notion that “our lives succeed or fail one conversation at a time”. Think about it. Each conversation in which you engage takes you a step—or several steps-- closer to heaven or hell both at home and at work. The author maintains that your conversations **ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**. That’s a bold premise on which to build a book! I invite you to invest \$10.55 on Amazon to learn Scott’s seven principles which ground your communication in meaning, authenticity, passion, integrity, and collaboration.

[Back to Top](#)

TIP

Identify 3 examples of conversations you've had in the last week where you *believe* you communicated your message with appropriate power and effectiveness. Then proactively seek "social proof" that you succeeded. Go ask the people involved in those conversations how they viewed and interpreted your behavior, word choice, voice volume/pitch/tone, and facial expressions. This is a great way to find out if their perceptions match yours. If they don't, be brave and explore the gaps.

[Back to Top](#)

Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On July 25, 2012 Sylvia conducted an hour-long [teleseminar](#) focusing on overload and overwhelm for 80+ professionals. During that phone event she provided ten real life strategies for gaining some control when overwhelm is a constant, destructive way of life. She will be offering a workbook through her website to help managers and executives implement those strategies.

On September 12, 2012 Sylvia will offer a luncheon talk entitled: "Using Your EQ to Create Your PI" to the South Central PA Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. This presentation will show attendees how to use their emotional intelligence proactively to form a professional image that truly works for them as well as benefits bosses, colleagues, Board members, and donors.

On September 19, 2012 Sylvia will share the spotlight at the annual day-long GIANT/Martins, A Hold conference for women managers to be held at the Harrisburg Hilton. A ninety-minute workshop entitled: "Emotional Intelligence: How to Grow It, Use It, and Leverage It", this highly engaging experience will teach the four components of EQ, differentiate between EQ and IQ, discuss how EQ determines professional success, and provide multiple strategies for enhancing EQ in ways that positively impact various facets of business life.



Join Sylvia on these social networks!

[Back to Top](#)

About This Ezine

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC is an executive coach based in South Central PA. Her mission is to support corporate and nonprofit executives and business owners as they solve problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives. Her background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales. A [certified executive coach](#) through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education, Sylvia is a platinum level expert author on ezinearticles.com. She has produced an audio CD entitled, “Making Change”, [three special reports](#) for persons in management positions, and an audio product designed for new managers.

More information is available at her

[Launching Lives Website](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is an executive coaching company located in South Central PA. Its mission is to support managers and executives to solve their most pressing problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives utilizing a holistic approach. Launching Lives focuses on BUILDING PEOPLE through individual private coaching, group coaching, specialized products, workshops, speeches, and retreats. Most coaching takes place by phone.

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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