

# **Building Teams that Communicate Effectively**

## **Module Four: The Martial Art of Communication**



**RESOURCE INTERNATIONAL**

## People Who Get on Your Nerves

Thinking about your relationships at work, what is it that people do or don't do that gets on your nerves and makes your job harder? Please make a list of the characteristics, behaviors, and emotions which people exhibit that you wish they did not. What types of people and what things do they do that really gets in your way?

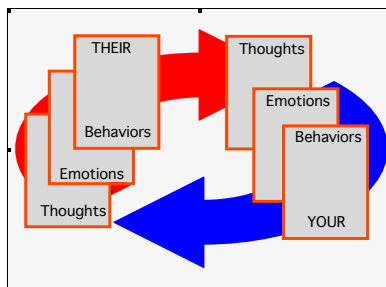


## How Their Behavior Affects Me

In considering the ways you described people who get on your nerves, please answer the following:

1. What thoughts/judgments/opinions do you have about them?
2. What emotions do you experience when thinking of their behavior, or when they do these things?
3. How do you behave around them as a result of your thoughts and emotions?
4. What do you experience in your body when under this stress?

# The Cycle of Conflict



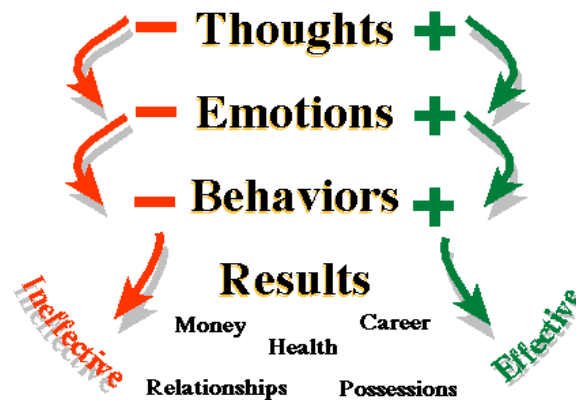
THEM

US

	<b>Thoughts</b>	
	<b>Emotions</b>	
	<b>Behaviors</b>	
	<b>Results</b>	

## The "Levels of Being"

1. Your thoughts create your feelings.
2. Your feelings express through your behaviors.
3. Your behaviors produce results.
4. These results are either effective or ineffective.
5. The more you are aware of the stress you experience on each of these levels, the sooner you can do something about it.

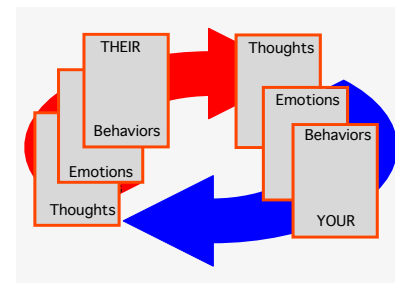


## How Their Behavior Affects Me

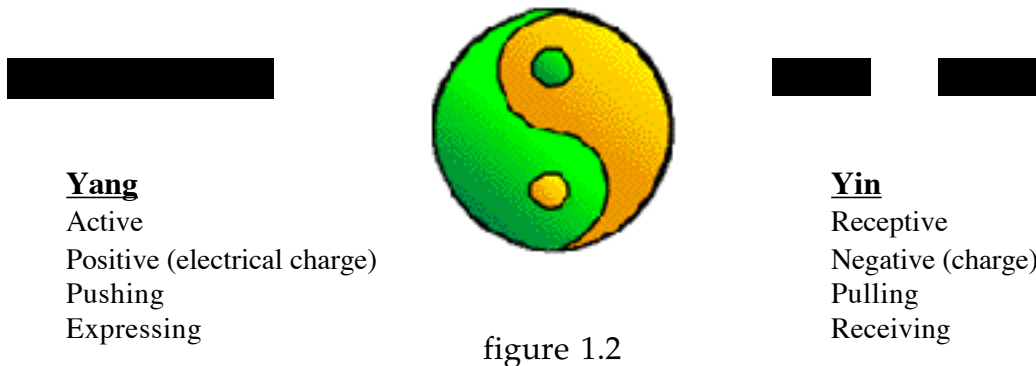
1. My behavior is a catalyst for their "Levels of Being" process.
2. Their thoughts create their feelings, which express through their behaviors and cause results for them.
3. We have been taught that the way others treat us means something about us, i.e., just because they are critical, we assume they do not respect us and therefore there could be something wrong with us.
4. It is likely that how a person behaves means more about them than about us.
5. Ask yourself, "What does this type of behavior tell me about:"
  - a. How this other person is feeling,
  - b. How this other person is thinking (about themselves)."
6. People who are unkind are hurting.
7. What you learn about another person is always valuable information for you.

## How My Behavior Affects Them

1. Ask yourself whether your behavior reinforces or helps to change their negative self-image and feelings.
2. Our negative reactions may actually reinforce the very behavior that we do not like, and are wanting for them to change.



## The Martial Art of Communication



The symbol in figure 1.2 was designed to demonstrate the relationship between the two forces of Yang and Yin (R. Wilhelm 1981, pgs. lv, 293, 294, 297). They could have drawn the symbol like a circle with two equal but opposite halves (figure 1.3).

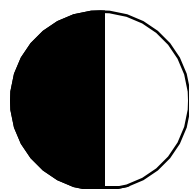


figure 1.3

But the symbol in figure 1.2 shows that these two forces are always in movement, always interacting, and are thereby dynamic, not static. It is unnatural to have two yangs without any yin, although you often see this when people argue. When two people are talking, no one is listening, nothing new happens. Neither is it natural to have two “yins,” without any yang. But everyone knows the all too familiar scenario, “What do you want to do tonight?” “I don’t know, whatever you want to do.” No one expresses an opinion or position, therefore nothing new happens.

Another oriental saying defines the relationship between these two forces: “Yin and Yang are equal, (meaning that one is not better than the other - they are equal in value) . . . but Yin always wins.”

“Yin and Yang are equal, but Yin always wins.”

Most people believe that the yang force will win, and so they push harder when they meet resistance. In the martial arts the yin force wins because it absorbs the force of the yang attack, stealing its momentum.



## The Be-Attitudes of The Martial Arts

The following four principles must be juggled at all times in order to maintain equilibrium when asserting oneself.

### Be Firm

- Know your own position - know what you want.
- Know and communicate your preferences (but don't push too hard for these).
- Know and state your fundamental requirements (and stand firmly for these - they are requirements!).
- When expressing yourself be clear about the difference between a firm expectation and a possible suggestion.
- Follow up on your agreements.

### Be Flexible

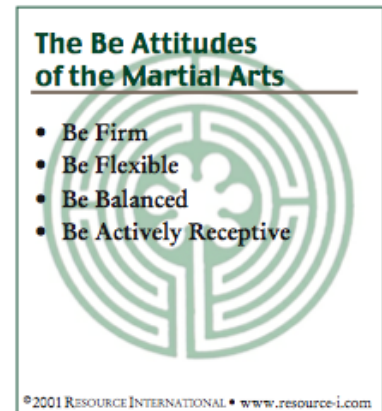
- Be willing to adjust your preferences (but don't give them away for free).
- Continue to be curious if the other person expresses any resistance.
- When you run into a block, reconfirm common agreements and then ask questions to resolve misunderstandings.

### Be Balanced

- Don't be pushy, but don't be a pushover.
- Balance firmness and flexibility by developing a sense of timing.
- Don't let your fundamental requirements impose on those of others.
- Understand the sources of your own emotional intensity.
- Never "play a card" unless you are willing to accept the consequences.
- The Principle of Relativity: Know your place in the overall scheme of things.
- Don't take it personally. It never is, even if it feels that way.

### Be Actively Receptive

- Develop leverage by helping the other person feel understood.
- Remember that understanding occurs when the other person feels understood, not when you think you understand.
- Remember that the goal of revenge is understanding. So provide understanding up front in order to avoid revenge.
- Receptivity absorbs it is not a vacuum, receptivity is an active force, it is not "being passive."
- Develop a sense of timing for when to express and when to listen, when to be firm and when to adjust.



## Potential Sharing Questions

During the next exercise you will be given time to either talk or listen. If your turn is to talk, you may use the sentences on this handout or you may share about any topic related to this seminar. Notice your experience of having someone listen completely, with a focus on “helping you be understood”, rather than “helping you”. Be aware of your own thoughts and feelings while your partner seeks to understand you.

If it is your turn to listen, don't just be passive. Be *Actively Receptive!* Notice your experience of giving someone your total attention. Notice any tendency to want to comment, explain, help, or fix, but don't do it. Keep your ideas to yourself. Create a feeling of being understood in your partner, without them knowing what you think!

*Please complete the following sentences with what's true for you.*



- One thing that would help us discuss difficult topics more honestly would be
- In the past I have coped with conflict/disagreement with others by . . .
- When I think something I might say could hurt someone's feelings I . . .
- An instance in which a supervisor listened empathetically and wholeheartedly to me . . .
- Subordinates I have trouble listening to . . .
- Two ways I believe we could work better together as a team would be . . .
- A situation about how we work as a team that frustrates me is . . .
- We could feel more comfortable about asking each other questions by . . .
- People I work with . . .

## The Water Glasses Model ©

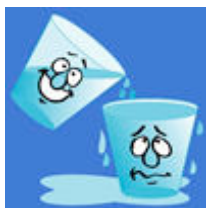
There are so many books and trainings on the topic of active listening one would think that by now everyone would have become an expert. Unfortunately, in the middle of a disagreement or misunderstanding most people are hit by an automatic emotional wave that knocks all communication skills out of the window. So it is actually important to have some very basic guidelines that may seem ridiculously simple. The simpler they are, the easier they are to remember and to practice. Here is a simple analogy to keep in mind the next time you feel your emotional wave overflowing.



As illustrated in figure to the left, the glass represents you, and the water is your thoughts. The second glass to the right represents the other person, and the water in that glass represents his thoughts.



The splashing water in glasses to the right shows you what an argument looks like. You are trying to get some of your thoughts into him, and he is trying to get some of his thoughts into you. A little exchange is actually happening, but generally it just makes a big mess. And usually no one is really listening.



What would happen if you just started pouring your water into his glass? Of course, it would overflow all over the floor. He is too full of his ideas, so there is no room for yours. You need to create some openness. Some people try to do this by punching a hole in the other person's cup, puncturing his ego by pointing out that he is wrong.

But if you attack the other person, he is not likely to want to listen to you. He may go back to friends who agree with him, until his ego is repaired. Then he will return to argue with you again because he knows you did not understand him.



It is true that you need the other person to be more open, but there is another way to accomplish this. Take your thoughts and set them aside for a moment. These thoughts will be there when you get back. Create some openness in yourself first, open up some 'empty space' in yourself, and just as he expects you to argue with him, stop and say,



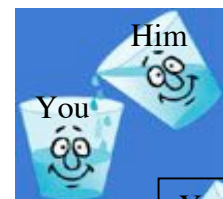


*The Water Glasses Model, continued*

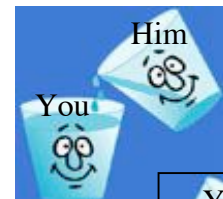
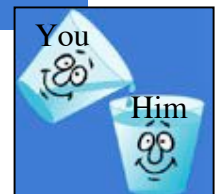
### 3 Questions For Ending Conflict<sup>©</sup>

*Use the Three Questions to get him to pour his ideas into you - first! And then repeat what you understood.*

1. ***"This is really important. What is it you want me to know?"*** Become a receptive force, drawing information out of the other person. He will pour his thoughts, his 'water', into you. Repeat his words back without adding any of your own 'water glass thoughts' (*we'll deal with those later*), just to make sure your understanding is accurate and to make sure he feels understood.
2. And then you say, ***"Is there anything else?"*** What do you think is the likelihood that the other person has more thoughts that he has not yet shared? Pretty good. He will pour out more of his thoughts, some more 'water'. Remember you repeat his words just to make sure you are clear and he feels understood.
3. Finally you say, ***"Is that all?"*** Pause, and give the other person time to think. You want to squeeze all water you can out, to create as much open space as possible for him to consider your ideas.



*Listen,  
then  
Repeat*



*Listen,  
then  
Repeat*



The simple truth is this:

***If you want to get people to become more open to your ideas or suggestions, first be open to considering theirs.***

This is the simple principle of "seek first to understand." The Three Questions For Eliminating Misunderstanding<sup>©</sup> listed above are necessary in order to make certain your understanding is thorough and accurate. Together with the Five Levels of Communication<sup>©</sup>, these two communication models enable you to assist others to communicate not only what they were aware of but also what they had not yet thought to say. You learn to hear what is said but also what is not said. The goal is for the other person to know you have "got it!" for them to feel completely understood - and ideally - have no idea what you think about it - yet.

*You now know everything they know and they only know what they know!*



***The Golden Rule  
(It Is True In All Cultures)***

**Hinduism:** "This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."

Mahabarata 5:1517

**Buddhism:** "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

Udana-Varga 5:18

**Confucianism:** "Surely it is the maxim of loving kindness: Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you."

Analects 15:23

**Christianity:** "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for that is the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 7:12

**Islam:** "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

**Judaism:** "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellowman. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary."

Talmud, Shabbat 31a

**Taoism:** "Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien

**Zoroastrianism:** "That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself."

Dadistan-i-dinik 94:5



## **To Know and Not to Do is to Not Know** *(Here There Be Dragons!)*



In ancient times, when you entered the doorway to a school of the mysteries of life, there was a warning above the door. It said, “Here There Be Dragons!” The warning was that knowledge could be dangerous if it is not used. Students were therefore cautioned from the very moment they entered the school to be conscientious and practical in the application of what they learn.

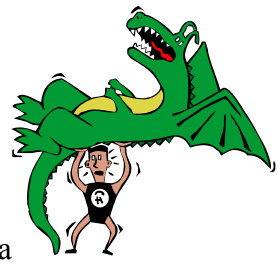
Much of what is presented in this program is known by most people. Maybe not the specific tools and techniques are known, but the general philosophy of respect for differences. We all know it is important to be respectful and to have other people feel understood. We know that cooperation is better than coercion. We know how we want to be treated and thus we should have a pretty good idea of how to treat others. But in practice it is difficult. Why?

*Please make a few notes about you think are the reasons why we have difficulty implementing all the good things we know would serve us, and others, better?*



### What I Will Do!

First, make a list in the left hand column below of those ideas, tools and/or techniques you have learned from the past two days that you want to make sure you remember. When you have finished, for each idea or tool, think of a specific time and place where you will have the opportunity to practice. Later, return to make notes on what you did do and what effect it had on the situation.



<b>Idea or Technique Learned from Program</b>	<b>Opportunity to Practice at Work</b>	<b>Evaluation of Effects (+&amp;-)</b>

## Preparing for Phase II

In the next two-day program you will be introduced to additional models for improving communication. You will take another self-scoring instrument that will clarify your appreciation of diverse cultures. And you will learn techniques for making decisions and solving problems together. In the meantime, take notes on what concerns you. When you have a difficulty and challenge, remember that you are in a training program designed to help you. Make a few notes so that when you return you will have specific, real world examples with which to work. Whether or not you choose to talk about these circumstances with other members of the training program, at least be clear with yourself about where and with whom you want to improve your effectiveness in communicating in a team.

**Notes for Next Time:**

