



The 12 Road Blocks to Communication

1) ORDERING /DIRECTING /COMMANDING

(Telling someone to do something or giving them a command.) “Stop complaining!” “You must do your work!”

2) WARNING /ADMONISHING /THREATENING

(Telling someone the consequences that will occur if they do something.) “Keep doing that and you will be fired.” “If this does not change you will be sorry.” “You better take care of this or else!”

3) EXHORTING /MORALIZING /PREACHING

(Telling someone what they should do or ought to do.) “You should not act like that.” “You ought to do this.” “You must always...”

4) ADVISING /GIVING SOLUTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

(Telling a person how to solve a problem. Giving a person advice or suggestions. Providing answers or solutions.) “I suggest you forget about this.” “Why don’t you take a vacation?” “You could try something else.” “My advice on this is...”

5) LECTURING /TEACHING /GIVING LOGICAL ARGUMENTS

(Trying to influence a person with facts, counter-arguments, logic, or your own opinion.) “If you do not stay in line you will not get a promotion.” “Think of it this way: it could be worse.” “Let us look at the facts.”

6) JUDGING /CRITICIZING /DISAGREEING /BLAMING

(Making a negative judgment or evaluation of a person, trying to get them to stop doing what they are doing.) “You are not thinking clearly.” “You are wrong about that.” “I disagree with you about that.” “That is a silly point of view.” “That will not work.” “That is impossible.”

7) PRAISING /AGREEING

(Offering a positive evaluation or judgment, agreeing, trying to get them to keep doing what they did.) “You are fantastic.” “You are really good at this.” “I really like it when you do that.” “I totally agree with you, you are so right.”

8) NAME CALLING /RIDICULING /SHAMING

(Making a person feel foolish, putting someone into a category, shaming someone.) “You are Mr. Know It All.” “Do you always make mistakes like this?” “You are the problem here.”

9) INTERPRETING /ANALYZING /DIAGNOSING

(Telling a person what his motives are, analyzing why a person is doing or saying something, communicating that you have someone figured out.) “You are just jealous.” “You really don’t believe that at all.” “You feel that way because you just lost the game.” “You did that for revenge.”

10) REASSURING /SYMPATHIZING /CONSOLING /SUPPORTING

(Trying to make someone feel better, trying to talk someone out of their feelings, trying to make someone’s feelings go away, denying the strength of someone’s feelings.) “You will feel different tomorrow.” “Everyone goes through periods like this.” “Do not worry. Things will work out okay.” “I used to think that way to.” “The same thing happened to me!”



11) PROBING /QUESTIONING /INTERROGATING

(Trying to find reasons, motives, causes. Searching for more information to help you solve their problem.) “When did you start feeling this way?” “Where did you get that idea?” “Why would you do something like that?” “What does that imply to you?”

12) WITHDRAWING /DISTRACTING /HUMORING /DIVERTING

(Trying to get someone away from the problem. Withdrawing from the problem yourself. Distracting the person, kidding them out of it, pushing the problem aside.) “Just forget about it.” “Come on, let us go get some ice cream.” “That guy is just a jerk anyway.” “I am not interested in this stuff.” “We have been through all this before.” “How was your vacation?” “Oh, well. It only cost a million Euros.”

(These ideas come from Dr. Thomas Gordon’s book, P.E.T. Parent Effectiveness Training. ISBN 0-452-26461-8. We highly recommend that you read the whole book.)