

The ABCs of Good Communication

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ACTIVE

Tips to being active in conversation:

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Active listening requires listening to understand others and not just to respond. It requires one to keep their attention and focus on the conversation.

BE PRESENT

Not all conversations are thrilling, but be sure to be present. Avoid checking your phone or letting your mind wander off (what you need at the grocery store can wait).

PARTICIPATE

Verbal and non-verbal cues can be beneficial in conversation. Appropriate nods and acknowledgements go a long way. Also, be sure to engage and respond appropriately.



BALANCED

Staying balanced in conversation

KEEP STEADY

Try to maintain an even temper. Be mindful of your tone and body language, especially if you disagree or are frustrated.

BE PATIENT

Everyone has their own thoughts and ideas. It may take some people longer to understand what you are saying or the message you are conveying.

BE ACCOMMODATING

Consider other peoples' communication styles and strengths and adjust to accommodate them. That may require being more delicate with wording or being clear with requests.

Individual communication style varies. Some people may avoid eye contact while others don't break eye contact. Some people may use sign-language to communicate or a computer. Regardless of differences in communication style, it is good to consider your strengths and capitalize on them.

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CONSIDERATE

It can be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- How may someone else's view differ?
  - Perspective and experiences shape a lot. It may not be that someone is right or wrong, but simply see things in a different manner.
- Is the information you are sharing fact or opinion?
  - Be sure to use credible sources when sharing information, especially in an academic setting.
- If you disagree, is it in a kind way?
  - It is okay to disagree. Just be sure to be kind and respectful.
  - Keep an open mind.
- Be mindful of your non-verbal cues (like body posture)
- Consider your audience
  - Are you speaking with peers? Professors? Friends? Your tone, preparation, and content may vary greatly.

DIRECT

Being clear and direct can help mitigate confusion and provide direction.

Consider the following:

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

Are you making a recommendation? Trying to get someone to do something/persuade people? Trying to share knowledge? Know your goal and get to the point clearly and concisely. If you are not sure what you are trying to say, your audience may get confused.

HOW IS YOUR LANGUAGE?

Avoid common idioms. Idioms can be particularly confusing for English language learners. Keep sentences and ideas simple and clear.

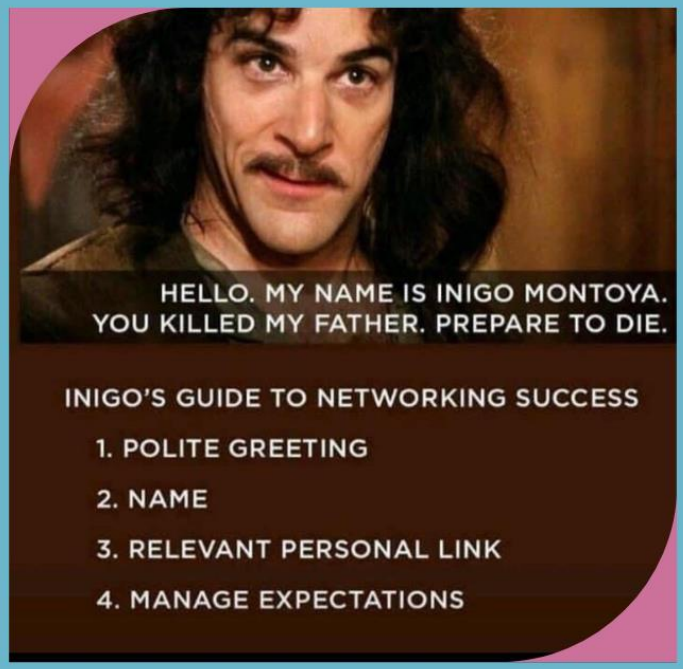
Common Idioms and Replacements:
Throw caution to the wind --> Take a risk
Leave no stone unturned --> Be thorough
See eye to eye --> In agreeance

BE SPECIFIC

End your statement with your exact request or point.

Example: "In considering the direction of the project, the following reasons X, Y, and Z lead me to believe that we should A. Therefore, I would like to discuss if A is an option."

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Don't forget to be confident! Everyone has insecurities and communicates in different ways. Communication is about being able to share ideas. It doesn't have to be perfect! Just be you!