

# Creating Positive Relationships through Effective Communications

**Jon Green**

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## Housekeeping ...

- Please silence all devices and avoid their use
- If need restroom during session please do so as it is a two hour session
- Informal session – stop me with questions or observations
- Examples from home relevant to work
- Handouts

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## Learning Objectives

1. Identify the impact that your skills and behaviors have on the satisfaction levels of those with whom you interact.
2. Distinguish the correlation between the effectiveness of your communications and the *perception* of your professionalism and quality of your work.
3. Predict how you are *perceived* when you are in the Parent, Adult, or Child ego state, and how each either creates cooperation or resistance.
4. Differentiate which words and phrases cause defensiveness and resistance, thus reducing cooperation.
5. Differentiate which words and phrases create cooperation, thus reducing resistance.
6. Translate how utilizing effective communication skills creates positive relationships with customers, colleagues and family/friends.

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## What this session is NOT...

- Some current fad or unfounded theory
- To TELL you how to communicate
- I am not your dictator telling you what you HAVE to do

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## What this session IS...

- Proven tools (grounded in science) to increase the satisfaction levels of those with whom you communicate
- I'm your coach (certified with 30+ years experience) training you on successful techniques
- Each of you will determine to what degree you wish to practice and integrate this into your communications and relationships

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## Communications ...

Do you communicate from the perspective of what **YOU** want or need? [one way]

OR

From the perspective of what you and the other party may **MUTUALLY** gain from the interaction?  
[interactive]

Definition of 'customer':

*Every individual with whom you interact*

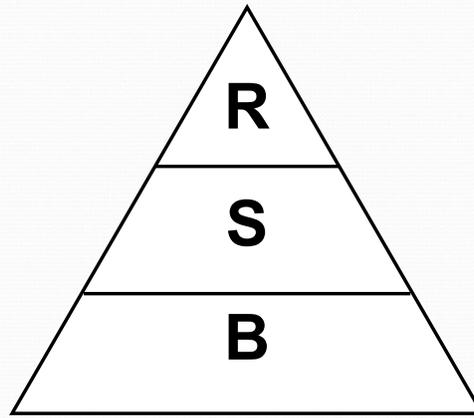
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## Satisfaction Model

**Results** = A person's level of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) is measured by their total experience with our skills and our behaviors.

**Skills** = What we are trained to do or have learned to do in our professional (i.e., mechanic, nurse, teacher) and personal lives (i.e., mother, father). Our skills enable us to perform our tasks.

**Behaviors** = What we say and do when interacting with others. Includes tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, use of specific words and phrases.



**Behaviors + Skills = Results**

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## Corporate Culture

The culture of any organization (or department/division) is shaped by the worst behavior the leader is willing to tolerate.

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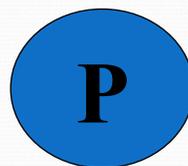
## Satisfaction Levels

AND

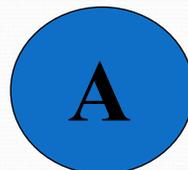
Your “customer’s” satisfaction levels are determined by their experience with the employee with the worst behaviors.

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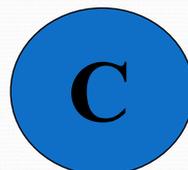
## Ego States – Whole Person



**Parent**



**Adult**



**Child**

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## Parent Ego State

- Rooted in:
  - Beliefs [i.e. British roads]
  - Rules [i.e. silverware/soda can]
  - Values [i.e. car, elderly, water]
- Two sides of “Parent”:
  - Controlling Parent
  - Nurturing Parent

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## Controlling Parent Sounds and acts like ...

- All-knowing
- Manipulative
- Critical
- Prejudiced
- “My way or highway”
- Authoritarian/Dictator/’ Superior’
- Dislikes facts (i.e., toilet paper)
- Controlling
- Pompous
- Judgmental
- Opinionated
- Never wrong
- Likes assumptions

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## Flicker or Spinner?



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## How to avoid being in the Controlling Parent

- Control personal emotions/feelings
- Active listening
- Ask questions
- Don't force facts or opinions
- Don't need to be right

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## Controlling Parent feels like...



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## Nurturing Parent Sounds and acts like ...

- Caring
- Kind
- Loving
- Humane
- Compassionate

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## Nurturing Parent feels like...



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## Adult Ego State

### Rooted in: Logic / 'thinker'

- Gathers data / information – asks good questions
- Excellent listener
- Likes facts
- Dislikes judgments, assumptions, etc.
- Analyst
- Reality based (“human”)
- ‘Here and now’ (not the past)
- Alternatives / options (others’ input)
- Executive Control Center

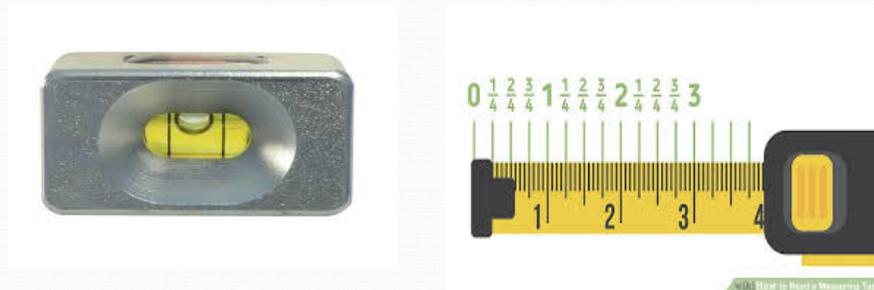
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## How to be in the Adult

- Control personal emotions/feelings
- Ask questions
- Active listening
- Focus on now and the future – not the past

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## Adult feels like...



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## Child Ego State

### Rooted in: Feelings, Emotions

#### Sounds and acts like ...

- Emotional vs. intellectual
- Instinctive drives} reactive / impulsive
- Manipulative
- Defensive
- Intuitive
- Fun-loving
- Curious and creative

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## Child Responses

### Adapted - Compliant

Says *Yes* but prefers *No*

- “*Sure!*”
- “*Fine!*”
- “*Whatever*”

### Adapted - Rebellious

Pushed too far

- “*You and who’s army?*”

### Natural Child

- ‘Comfortable’ feelings
- Short lived / forgotten

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## How to control (not avoid) your Child

- Count to 10
- Maintain control of your emotions/feelings
- Focus on the facts
- Ask questions to understand the other person and situation

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Child feels like...



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## Problem Solving



**BLAME** – Attacks the person

Uses canned solutions



**SOLVE** – Attacks the problem

Uses Alternatives, Options, Decisions



**AVOID** - Ignores Problem

Flees or Fights

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## Tools to Problem Solve with ...

### **Parent Ego State**

- Ask open ended questions (don't continue to make statements)

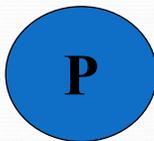
### **Child Ego State**

1. Verbally identify the emotion with two options (or "I can see this affects you")
2. Ask open ended questions

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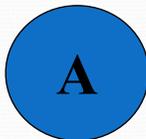
## Review Ego States

**Nurturing  
Parent**

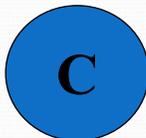


**Controlling  
Parent**

**Adult**



**Natural  
Child**



**Adapted-Compliant  
Adapted-Rebellious**

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## Words to Avoid

### (Controlling Parent)

- A. You have to...  
You need to...  
You must...
- B. I need (want) you to...
- C. I can't/you can't...
- D. Can I help you?
- E. Would you mind...?

## Words to Use

### (Adult)

- 1. Will you...  
Are you willing/able...  
Please...
- 2. I am able/unable...
- 3. May I help you?  
How may I help you?
- 1. Please

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## Words to Avoid

F. What's your problem?

G. Obviously, ...

H. I'm sorry...

I. But...

Yeah, but, ...

J. It's just a ...

It's only...

## Words to Use

3. How may I help you?

4. It appears/seems that...

5. I apologize for...

6. However, ...

And ...

7. This is what you can expect... This is what happened... Here are the facts ...

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## Words to Avoid

K. Best/Worst

Should/Ought

L. It's required/necessary

It's policy

## Words to Use

8. What have you considered?

What are the options?

Which do you prefer?

What are the alternatives?

9. Here are some options...

1. Please

2. I am able to... However,  
I am unable to...  
because...[facts]

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## Words to Avoid

M. I understand...  
how you feel.  
how painful it is.

N. Jargon

O. I'll try.

P. It's not my job.

## Words to Use

10. I see...  
I hear...

11. Common terms  
7<sup>th</sup> grade level

2. I am able/unable...  
Yes/No

12. I don't have that answer.  
I will find the answer or  
the person to assist you.

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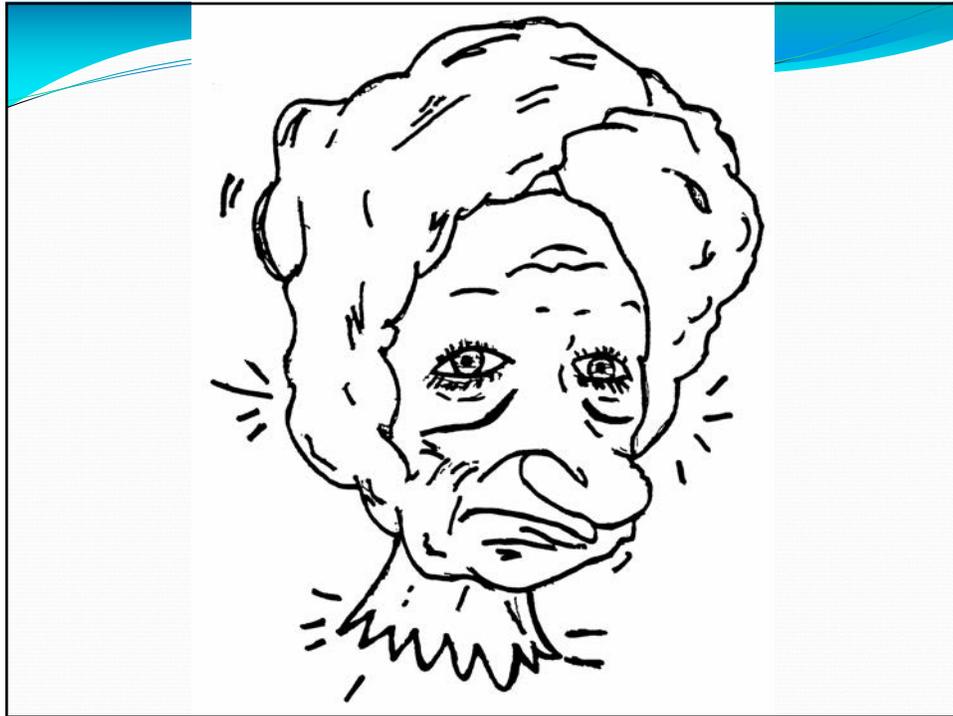
## Words to Avoid

Q. It's not my fault.  
I didn't do it.  
*Person A or department B  
did it.*

## Words to Use

13. I apologize this was  
your experience. If you  
are willing, please  
share the details  
[facts]with me so I can  
assist you.

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## Words to Use

(and to substitute for avoid words)

- Phrases 1** – “Will you...”  
“Are you willing/able...”  
“Please...”

These phrases invite participation and cooperation instead of dictating.

**Substitute** for A, B, E and L

**Phrase 2** – “I am able / unable ...”

People hear what is possible and not possible, not that we have made a subjective decision (can/can't). Instead of hearing “can't,” they hear “won't.” Always explain the “why” or “reasons” because most people are cooperative once they understand the facts/details.

**Substitute** for C, L and O

## Words to Use

### **Phrases 3** – “May I help you?” “How may I help you?”

The word “may” invites permission to help the other person. These phrases ask the other person to specifically tell us what they want us to do. It shows a willingness to work with the other person to understand and meet their needs.

**Substitute** for D and F

### **Phrase 4** – “It appears / seems that...”

This phrase does not send the message that you are accusing the other person of knowing all the facts/details and still acting inappropriately. It gives the other person the benefit of the doubt and allows you to learn the facts/details from the other person’s perspective. Also, it does not have a sarcastic tone to the message.

**Substitute** for G

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## Words to Use

### **Phrase 5** – “I apologize for...”

This phrase shows sincerity and is more believable. We usually explain the “why” when we use “apologize.” Historically, this phrase has not been intentionally used sarcastically. Use this when talking to a person who does not know you well.

**Substitute** for H

### **Word 6** – “However, ...” or “And ...”

This word doesn’t create a negative, defensive wall between people. It respects what the other person said and doesn’t discount the message. It builds a bridge with what the other person has said. Even if you do not agree with what they said, the word “however” keeps the other person’s emotions low so they will actually listen to your thoughts rather than “rehearse” their response while you talk (thus not listen to what you say).

**Substitute** for I

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## Words to Use

**Phrases 7** – “Here is what you can expect...”  
“This is what happened...”

These explain the facts/details of either what will occur or what did occur. When people are informed, they are usually more cooperative and it reduces their stress level.

**Substitute** for J

**Phrases 8** – “What have you considered?”  
“What are the options?”  
“Which do you prefer?”  
“What are the alternatives?”

These questions allow us to listen to the other person’s needs, feelings, ideas, etc., rather than dictate and force our choices on the other person. When we listen to someone it is difficult for them to see us as dictatorial.

**Substitute** for K

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## Words to Use

**Phrase 9** – “Here are some options...”

This gives others a choice so we don’t dictate limited or no choices. People cooperate when they participate in decision making. People become defensive and uncooperative when they are told what to do.

**Substitute** for K

**Phrases 10** – “I see...”  
“I hear...”

These clearly state that you understand their needs and feelings. It states you can connect with them rather than dismiss their needs/feelings. When working with someone’s high emotions (i.e., anger), first verbally state the feeling or emotion you see (when in person) or hear (when on the phone) and then proceed to ask them questions. This process will validate their feelings and invite them into their Adult ego state.

**Substitute** for M

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## Words to Use

### **Phrases 11** – Common terms.

7<sup>th</sup> grade level.

Be careful to use words and phrases that are understood by everyone. College communications courses recommend using 7<sup>th</sup> grade level terms to ensure that the majority of individuals will understand. Most individuals will not admit that they don't understand – thus there will be miscommunication resulting in potential future problems.

**Substitute** for N

### **Phrase 12** – “I don't have that answer. I will find the answer or the person to assist you.”

This shows you are taking responsibility to assist with their question/problem/concern. It reduces their stress level and increases their appreciation in you and the organization.

**Substitute** for P

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## Words to Use

### **Phrase 13** – “I apologize this was your experience. If you are willing, please share the details with me so I can assist you.”

This phrase indicates that you will take responsibility, on behalf of the organization, to help them resolve their problem/concern. The apology reduces their stress level and invites them to share the details with you moving them into their Adult ego state (where you can solve the problem/ concern based on the facts/details).

**Substitute** for Q

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

(This group of words and phrases are Controlling Parent statements.)

**Phrases A** – “You have to...”  
“You need to...”  
“You must...”

This group of phrases dictates to others that they need to do exactly what the person says, with no options, alternatives, or say in the matter. “Do as I say or else you cannot do anything at all.”

**Phrase B** – “I need (want) you to...”

Use of the word “I” puts the importance on the speaker and not on the person to whom you are speaking. What you (“I”) want and the other person wants may not be the same. Also, there can be a big difference between what “I” want and what the other person is capable of actually doing.

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrase C** – “I can’t / you can’t...”

People don’t hear “can’t,” they hear and process the word “won’t,” which means they feel you are capable but instead you have decided not to. It leaves the other person to assume the reasons why you chose not to do something for them.

**Phrase D** – “Can I help you?”

The word “can” relates to your capabilities. If someone you are speaking to is already upset and you ask if you can (capably) help them, you may get a very sarcastic response (i.e., “I doubt it, no one else around here seems to be able to.”)

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

### **Phrase E** - “Would you mind?”

This is heard/received as sarcastic, even if this was not your intention. The hidden message is “you should have known to do it before I had to ask.” It fails to take into consideration “why” the person originally did what they did.

### **Phrase F** - “What’s your problem?”

This is perceived as a sarcastic way of asking what is wrong, even if this was not your intention. You will invite a very negative, emotional response.

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

### **Word G** - “Obviously...”

When the word is spoken, the other person hears sarcasm because the hidden message is he/she should have known something related to the topic without having to be told. Typically the person saying “obviously” has not explored the facts related to the topic and turns out to be wrong about the person or the event. He/she fails to listen first to the other person to understand their involvement.

### **Phrase H** - “I’m sorry...”

This phrase is fine when used with people who know you well. The danger of using it with strangers is they may have a prior history of people close to them using the phrase, “I’m sorry,” when in fact it was clear they were not (i.e., family with parents always fighting). If they couldn’t believe the people close to them were sincere when they said it, how can they believe a total stranger?

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrases I -** “But, ...”  
“Yeah, but, ...”

These phrases create an instant negative, defensive wall between people. People forget what nice things are said before the word “but” and then expect the worst to come after the word “but.” The message processed is, “What I just said is wrong and what you are about to say next, is correct.”

**Phrases J -** “It’s just a...”  
“It’s only...”

This minimizes the value of something according to the speaker and forces this value on others (i.e., “It’s just a little needle.”).

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrases K -** Best / Worst  
Should / Ought

These are usually used to tell people what to do without being asked for the advice. They are usually used at a time when others want us to listen to them rather than to give them uninvited answers/advice. Many times the advice we are giving others is seen as advice that we ourselves don’t follow. (“Do as I say, not as I do.”)

**Phrases L -** “It’s required / necessary.”  
“It’s policy.”

Utilizing these words assumes the other person understands our policies and procedures. When they don’t and you do, they see you in a power role and themselves in a powerless role. People usually do not cooperate when they have not been given concrete reasons to understand why they should do so. Most people will cooperate when they understand the “why” or the benefits to them for participating and cooperating.

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrases M -** “I understand how you feel.”  
“I understand how painful it is.”

If used when responding to someone’s feelings/emotions, you will likely be challenged that you don’t understand, because each person’s experience is theirs, personally, and they don’t believe anyone else can experience/understand it. It is appropriate to use it when responding to fact/details (non-emotions/feelings).

**Word N -** Jargon

We must be careful to use words, phrases and terms that the general public understands. Most people will not ask when they don’t understand because they fear they will look “dumb.” They assume if you are using the words, that you expect them to understand the conversation.

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrase O -** “I’ll try.”

People want a “yes” or a “no” answer. Saying “I’ll try” leaves the other person anxious and uncertain when it will happen, if it does in fact ever happen.

**Phrase P -** “It’s not my job.”

This phrase says the employee is not willing to help someone with their needs. Unfortunately, the customer now feels that the company (due to the employee’s response) is not helpful or caring.

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## Words to Avoid & Reasons Why

**Phrases Q -** “It’s not my fault.”  
“I didn’t do it.”

These phrases say the employee is taking the complaint personally and doesn’t realize they should be apologizing on behalf of the organization. The message to the customer is they will not get problem solving assistance or an apology. The customer now feels that the company (due to the employee’s response) is not helpful or caring.

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## In review and closing ...

- Objectives
- Value of tools depends on your level of efforts
- Questions?
- Thank you.

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