



# **Interactive Communication Course**

## **Practice Exercises**

# Communication Drills Booklet

This set of drills allows us to practice all the information we have covered so far in understanding the subject of communication.

The purpose of these drills is to improve our overall ability to control and manage communication in various life and work circumstances.

Communication is a skill. Like any skill you get better at it by practicing. Before pilots fly a real plane they practice in a simulator and they get to put all their knowledge into practice and become great at it. Then they go and do it in real life by putting into practice everything they practiced or drilled. These drills are similar for communication. You will practice until you can do it without thinking about it. You'll be a natural!

Once you complete all these drills, your communication ability will be permanently improved!

## How we complete these drills

Here is a reminder of how we will approach these drills:

Based upon what you have learned so far, what we need to do, in order to get our communications skills even better, is to take each part of the communication sequence and practice it. Such as:

1. Practicing simply confronting by 'being there' with eyes closed
2. Practice confronting by 'being there' with eyes open
3. Practice confronting with eyes open and with our study partner doing everything in their power to distract us and to stop us from 'being there'. This toughens us up a bit and could be called Advanced Confronting or Provoking
4. Practice getting our communication across to the other person
5. Practice acknowledgements
6. Practice \*half-acknowledgements
7. Practice getting our questions answered
8. Practicing interactive communication

\*We have covered acknowledgements. A half-acknowledgement is when we want to the person to continue speaking. If your mom, for example, is talking to you, and you say something like, "and then?" or "Uha" (uhmm) or "go on", all these let the other person know you are listening and they should keep talking. This is a half-acknowledgement. A full acknowledgement like "Okay" or "Fine" or "Good", tends to end the communication.

## The sequence we use

This is the sequence of how we will proceed on this course:

- Read through all the drills one-by-one to get familiar with the process
- Read the article called "The Role of your Study Partner"
- Read the first drill again before doing the first drill

- Do the first drill
- Read the second drill
- Do the second drill
- Continue until the end of drill 9
- Refer back to the “The Role of your Study Partner” article as needed

Your facilitators will now give you the Interactive Communications Drills Booklet and get you started on the first drill.

## Passing drills

As these drills are completed, one by one, learners experience various improved perceptions or realizations or new viewpoints about communication. Sometimes these are referred to as ‘wins’ and once you have a win that happens during the drill, you and your facilitator will know when the win is major and will tell you that the drill has been completed. You may have many wins along the way whilst doing the drill.

A formative assessment is done by your facilitator at the end of each drill. If you are found competent in that particular skill, you are passed and you move on to the next drill.

We will now take you through each drill and explain how it is to be conducted.

# CD 1: Communication Drill 1

## Confront, Closed Eyes

In all the drills the coach and study partner sit facing each other a comfortable distance apart. This is usually about one meter apart. The facilitators can demonstrate this to you if you are unsure.

### Purpose of this Drill

Based upon the use of study skills, getting to a better level of skill requires a gradual, in sequence approach (in sequence and at your pace). Your communication skill is somewhere on a scale from lower to higher and this drill has the purpose of increasing your level of skill even more. To do this, this drill requires you to start facing your study partner and to do so at first with your eyes closed.

Later we will increase the degree of difficulty by doing the same drill but with eyes open. Later again we will add other drills that gradually improve your skill more and more throughout the course.

You will notice your skill improving bit by bit as the course progresses.

This drill, confronting with closed eyes, means you have to simply 'be there' and do nothing else. It is a simple drill and gets you able to do the drill that follows this. Sitting comfortably and being there is all it takes.

Being there whilst also being frustrated or angry or uncomfortable or bored or nervous are all not just 'being there'. Being there means just being there, comfortably.

### How to do the Drill

You and your study partner sit facing each other, a comfortable distance apart, about 1 meter. As explained above, you face each other with your eyes closed, for this practical. Your course facilitator will say "Start" to get the drill started and will say "That's it" to end the drill. This is all that happens. The facilitators can supervise a whole class of learners all doing the drill together.

You are paired up and sit opposite your study partner, but there is no interaction other than doing the drill.

Doing the drill is simple and requires that you are able to simply be there with no twitching, discomfort or 'method' or 'trick' for staying awake or alert, and to do so for a good amount of time. There is nothing to gain by trying to be fast or quick. This whole course is designed to improve your skills, and this also means putting in the time for each drill and getting the maximum gain or benefit that you can out of each practical.

The facilitator will assess your competence, one-by-one, not as a whole group, once you are able to do the drill comfortably with no resistance and desire to anything else other than 'be there' comfortably and you have a stable realization.

## **CD 2: Communication Drill 2**

### **Confront, Open Eyes**

Remember that the word 'confronting' here does not mean to take up a problem with someone or to get into a 'confrontation' or argument with someone. This definition of the word means an easy ability to simply face someone; to be present and observing; to be there and face the other person. This does not mean staring or glaring or anything else.

#### **Purpose of this Drill**

The purpose of this drill is to sit comfortably in front of someone and to be able to face that person without discomfort of any kind.

This skill is not always present with all of us. Sometimes culturally it is considered impolite to look at some one 'in the eyes'. For example, this could be true when talking to your grandfather. In business, we need the skill of being able to 'look someone in the eyes' or to simply face them and communicate.

This drill practices this skill and makes it easier and easier to do this without stress of any kind.

If you are in a business meeting with a client and you keep looking down and speaking softly, the meeting will not go well. If you have an angry client accusing your company of some wrong-doing, to look down and not face the person will make the situation more complicated and probably unsuccessful.

Being able to face the person, 'look into their eyes', comfortably, is a skill you will need for the rest of your life.

At home, talking to grandfather, you revert to your cultural communication skills. You now have two skills; one for business and one for some social situations determined by culture.

#### **How to do the Drill**

Learners pair up as study partners, sitting as you were in the previous drill. One is the coach and one is the learner. After a while the roles are reversed. You choose who will be coach first, or get assistance from your facilitator.

To start the drill the coach says "Start" and to end the drill the coach says "That's it".

During the drill, if the learner does something that is not 'just being there' the coach says "That's it" and points out what happened and then starts the drill again.

Once the purpose of the drill has been achieved, the coach would say "Pass" and the drill is ended. Your facilitator would now complete a formative assessment to officially pass you or not, on that drill. If the facilitator assesses you as not yet competent, you simple continue the drill until you are competent.

The end objective is to be able to face or confront the other person comfortably with no other stresses or activities going on. No twitching, sleeping, jerks, movements or no discomfort of any kind.

Sometimes you have to go through some discomfort while doing the drill. Just continue with the drill and you will find the difficulty or discomfort will pass and you will be able to simply 'be there' and face the other person.

This is not a case of 'staring at the other person'; not at all. It is simply practising to sit there, comfortably, with no desire to do anything else but just that. Once you have reached this point, you will know. If you are sitting there getting angry or frustrated, then you haven't 'broken through' the barriers and reached the ability to simply 'be there'.

Whilst coaching your study partner you will say "That's it" to point out things such as:

- Twitching
- Being embarrassed or giggling or laughing
- Sitting with a body part more prominent than the others (for example, confronting with your forehead or your chin rather than just 'being there')
- Falling asleep
- Movement
- Yawning
- Any other thing that does not involve you 'being there' comfortably

Sometimes, if a body part is being used to confront the other person, that body part may show some discomfort like a sore shoulder or watery eyes or a sore stomach. If this happens, the coach must say "That's it" and correct the learner and continue the drill. Facilitators will be on stand-by to assist at any time.

Sometimes the learner may have to go back to the earlier drill for a while then back to the current drill if the process is too tough at the moment. This can be confirmed by your facilitator.

If something starts to happen, such as a twitch, simply continuing the drill will 'end it off again'. A reaction can happen that 'starts' and later, once further through the drill, 'stops' again. This is normal.

Blinking is fine. Unnatural or excessive blinking could be a problem if this is a reaction or 'button' that needs to be worked through. Check with your facilitator if you are unsure.

To end the drill, for a scheduled break, you also say "That's it" but you tell your partner that the drill is ended for that time period. After being found competent by your facilitator, you move onto the next drill.

## CD 3: Communication Drill 3

### Advanced Confront (Provoking)

#### Purpose of this Drill

The Advanced Confront drill allows for the coach to try and get a response from the learner that should not be present if the learner was simply 'being there'.

This process of getting a response or a reaction is called provoking.

To provoke can have a few definitions, all of which apply to this drill:

- To stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone
- To cause (certain feelings, especially anger or feelings of frustration, etc.) in a person
- To give rise to or bring about

Other words that are similar to 'provoke' are;

- To bait someone
- To annoy or bother someone
- To harass or irritate or embarrass someone

The purpose of this drill is to be there and do nothing else but be there even though your study partner is trying everything they can to cause you to have a reaction to something they do or say. They will be trying to provoke you.

The coach will say or do anything to provoke a reaction from you. You will practice this drill until you are able to deal with anything that comes your way. The other person can say or do anything and you must handle it like a professional without an inappropriate reaction on your part.

The coach uses any words or comments or gestures that cause a reaction from the learner. This reaction is like pushing a button and getting a sound in a toy or a door lock or something similar. You push the button and a response happens. An example could be that the coach says, "Why are you trying so hard not to laugh" or "why are you so short" or "your eyes are scary". The learner laughs or reacts in some way. This was a response. You repeat the thing that caused the response until there is no response. This handles the button. Get assistance from your facilitator if you are not widening the range of buttons you are looking for. Buttons can exist in any part of the person's life, from their body, to family, to habits, to specific subjects, to race, to likes and dislikes, to food, to weekends, to bad language, to living, to specific family members, to country to friends and to anything at all.

Once you can do this comfortably, with no more reactions to being provoked, you pass the drill.

This is very useful in life and in the workplace. Many, many times, over the years to come, you will be faced with an angry person, a very upset partner or child or neighbour or customer or colleague or landlord or community member, and will have to be able to deal with them professionally and coolly and in control.

This drill helps you achieve this. It is truly a powerful drill and the skill is very useful in life.

On the one side, there is you 'being cool, calm and collected', and on the other side, is the person in front of you shouting at you, cursing you, screaming at you, crying at your table, threatening or insulting you, being a racist in some way and in many different ways trying to provoke you.

In an interview you may feel so nervous you do not conduct a good interview. This drill helps get you over this. You may be faced with something that causes you to feel insecure or embarrassed or uncertain or 'lost' but this drill gets your ability improved to where dealing with these things is much easier.

Life is sometimes a big 'provoke'. It tests you. It looks for your weak spots. It tries to get you to make the wrong move. If you pass this drill, you will be able to deal with these 'tests' like a professional. It improves your overall communication ability and it lasts forever. It is also something you can practice after the course, if you like.

By 'being there' it does not mean that you agree or disagree with what is being said or done. It is only your ability to determine your own reaction to what is being said or done, rather than having an involuntary reaction to the situation.

This course, as a whole, is one of the courses you can do over and over. You can do this course at a higher and higher level if you choose to. It really is a game-changer in life.

## [How to do the Drill](#)

You sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

The coach gives a pass once a significant realization is achieved and the purpose of the drill is successfully reached.

This drill may take some time. Try to tackle this drill with purpose and interest. Be tough and have a strong intention to get your study partner through the drill and for you to do the same.

Once you have your study partner and the facilitator gives you the go ahead, you start the drill.

The coach says or does anything. You will get better at this as you keep doing the drill.

Any reaction from the learner causes a "That's it. You twitched. Start." or "That's it. You looked away. Start." or "That's it. You shuffled in your chair. Start." Or "That's it. You laughed. Start."

If the coach observes anything except 'being there', they follow the above process.

The coach must be as real as possible by using real examples or things that may come up in life or work. The coach may not touch the learner.



The coach may shout or be angry or sad or just anything to get a response from the learner. Any response, other than simply being there, gets the "That's it", indicate what it was, and then "Start" once again.

To some learners, this can be quite a tough drill even causing an upset now and again. That is okay. If your study partner gets angry with you, it is a 'button' you have used to make them angry. Push the button again until it is handled and no reaction occurs. Your study partner is now able to deal with this button and in fact it is no longer there. It is gone. Your partner is now able to communicate better. If you keep this up you will handle all buttons and your study partner will be better off and more competent and more able. This is an excellent result to achieve.

Here is one learner's comment:

"On the course you will hear people saying the business culture is to look the person you are communicating with in the eye. This has been a difficult practice for me to do on my own, but after this interactive communication course and doing the drills it has become natural for me to maintain eye contact when talking to one person or more. I am very grateful for this wonderful experience I got here on this course."

Once you receive a pass from your study partner, the facilitator conducts a competency assessment to pass you or not on this drill. Once competent, you move on to the next drill.

## **CD 4: Communication Drill 4**

### **Getting your Communication Across**

#### **Purpose of this Drill**

Here we practice getting your communication across from you to the other person in a way that it arrives, clearly, with the person you are addressing.

Sometimes we may say something too softly or too loudly or unclearly.

Getting your communication across to the other person is part of the communication sequence. Your communication needs to be understood by the other person. Getting your communication across assists this ability.

#### **How to do the Drill**

You sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

As the learner, you will receive a list of statements or comments from your facilitator or a book to use for this drill. The way the drill works is you choose a statement or comment from the list or the book, leaving out the "He said" or "She said" parts of the book or list, and 'give' the communication across to your study partner. The coach says "good" if this is successful.

Each sentence you choose is one part of the drill. You choose the sentence, you say it to your coach, and the coach either acknowledges you, or says that's it and the reason why and then starts you again.

One communication from you, if it gets across, the coach acknowledges you. You then take the next statement from the list and repeat the drill. If you do it correctly and the coach acknowledges you, by saying "Good" or something similar, you simply read the next statement, give it across to the coach and so on. You do this many, many times to get better and better at this skill. You may go up and down the list and use the same sentences or statements many times. This is not important. The important part is practising getting your communication across.

If the communication does not come across to the coach successfully the coach says "That's it" and says why and then gives the "Start" again.

NB: You read the phrase to yourself, you make it your own communication, you give it across to your coach and the coach acknowledges you if the communications gets across successfully.

If it does not, it may be unclear or too soft or too loud or simply not understood. In these cases the coach corrects you and continues.

Your accent or the way you pronounce the words does not have anything to do with this drill. Your mannerisms also do not play a part. You are simply trying to get your communication across.

NB: Remember too that all previous drills come into this. You need to be there and get your communications across.

The list may say "Oh no! What happened to my food?" You take this sentence, you make it your own, to give it across to your coach. The coach gets the communication clearly, and understands it, and gives you an acknowledgment. There will be many different statements you can use during this drill.

If the learner reads a line from the list and then looks up and says it to the coach in a way that seems to be just reading something, then the learner has not 'made it their own' first, and is reading. If this happens, the coach says "That's it. You were reading it to me. Start." The idea is to read what are you going to say, internalize it as your own, and then get your communication across, as if it was a natural communication from you to the coach.

You will see that this gets easier as you practice the drill.

Once you have achieved the purpose of the drill and can do this naturally without any strain or stress, your coach will give you a pass. The facilitator then does a competency assessment and once you pass this you can move on to the next drill.

# CD 5: Communication Drill 5

## Acknowledgements

### Purpose of this Drill

Earlier in this course we covered what an acknowledgement is. It is not the definition that says "you admit to something". It is a statement that tells the other person you have received their communication. It does not mean you agree or disagree. It means you received and understood their communication.

An acknowledgement is often left out of many people's communications. You may notice this around you from time to time.

An acknowledgement actually stops a communication. It says "Thanks. I received your communication exactly and completely."

Use of an acknowledgment helps you to control the flow of communication.

The purpose of this drill is to practice the correct use of acknowledgements until you can use them easily and naturally.

### How to do the Drill

As in the previous drills, you sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

As the coach, you will receive a list of statements or comments from your facilitator, the same one used in the previous drill. You take a statement or comment from the list, leaving out the "He said" or "She said" parts of the book or list, and give the communication across to your study partner. The learner acknowledges the statement or comment.

If the acknowledgement does not come across to the coach successfully the coach says "That's it" and says why and then gives the "Start" again, using the same phrase as was just used. Once it is done successfully, with that one statement, then you move on to the next on the list.

When the coach is acknowledged by the learner, the coach must feel that this ends the communication.

The learner gets the acknowledgment across just like the previous drill where the learner practiced getting their communication across.

The learner must not use only "Good" or "Thank you" or "Fine" as acknowledgements. Of course the learner can use these 3 acknowledgements but it is simply noted here that one should also vary the acknowledgements to what is appropriate to what the coach is saying. Saying "I understand" would be sometimes appropriate or "I see how that would feel" or "Wow, that's great."

If the acknowledgement does not come across or is not appropriate, the coach says "That's it". Says why, and repeats the statement just used until it is fine. The coach then continues with different statements or comments from the list.

Anything that is said by the learner that is appropriate to the statement by the coach is an appropriate acknowledgement.

After a bit of practice you will find this becoming more and more natural.

Once the purpose of the drill is achieved the coach will give the learner a pass. The facilitator then conducts a competency assessment and once this has been passed, you may continue with the next drill.

## **CD 6: Communication Drill 6 Half-Acknowledgements**

### **Purpose of this Drill**

As covered before, a half-acknowledgement encourages the person to keep talking.

A full acknowledgement stops a sequence of communication. A half-acknowledgement gets the person to keep talking.

The person you are talking to is telling you something and a half-acknowledgment lets them know you are listening and understanding them and that you are still prepared to listen until they have told you everything that they intended to.

You do not want to chop their communication in the middle or interrupt unnecessarily. Use of a half-acknowledgement helps maintain a smooth flow of communication.

Once you have achieved this skill and can use it naturally you have passed the drill.

### **How to do the Drill**

As in the previous drills, you sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

As the coach, you will receive a short one-page story to use as part of this drill. The coach reads the story to the learner. As the coach goes through the story, the learner gives the coach half-acknowledgements to encourage the coach to keep going and not to stop. The learner is interested in what the coach is reading and shows this by appropriate half-acknowledgements, that lets the coach know they should continue.

The coach may go through the story a few times and this is fine. The main purpose is to practice and get skilled at the use of half-acknowledgments.

The coach uses "Start" and "That's it" as in previous drills. If the half-acknowledgement is not effective the coach says "That's it", says why, gives a new "Start" and repeats the same part of the story, getting the learner to give the same half-acknowledgement, until it is fine.

The coach can pause, mid-sentence, to get the learner to use a half-acknowledgement. If the coach is going through the story a few times, the coach can vary where they paused or looked up, to keep the drill realistic.

The learner may use a comment such as "Uha" (uhmm) to encourage the coach. This is a half-acknowledgement.

Using a smile, or nodding your head, is also a half-acknowledgement.

Sometimes a questioning "yes?" may be fine as well. The point is, what you use as a half-acknowledgement, must keep the person talking and let them know you are interested and are listening. In social interactive communication, someone may be telling you something very interesting and you say "No way! And then?" and they keep talking. This is another example of a half-acknowledgement.

Once the purpose of the drill is achieved the coach will give the learner a pass. The facilitator then conducts a competency assessment and once this has been passed, you may continue with the next drill.

## **CD 7: Communication Drill 7**

### **Getting your Questions Answered**

#### **Purpose of this Drill**

This drill practices getting one question answered. Later we will expand this a little but for this drill, we concentrate on simply getting a single question answered.

Often, when managing people's communications and interacting with them, we may ask a question and the other person does not actually answer it. The conversation can go off in a different direction and you lose track of what your question was originally.

For example, you ask someone how their studies are going. They answer that this reminds them of getting headaches while studying. You ask about headaches. They answer that in addition to headaches they also lose concentration. You ask about concentration. And so we go around in circles. We could even call this circular communication.

When we look over the communication sequence that these drills are helping us master, we can see that getting the question answered is part of it, so that what starts at the point of origin, gets to the receipt point, as planned, so that it can be understood and then acknowledged.

Once you can get the question answered easily and competently, you have passed the drill.

## How to do the Drill

As in the previous drills, you sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

The learner will ask a question of the coach, and the coach answers. This is the basics of this drill.

The learner uses these two questions only and they are used repetitively:

"Is the sky blue?" or

"Does it rain sometimes?"

The learner chooses one of the questions, asks the coach, gets an answer from the coach and then acknowledges the coach. This is done repetitively, with the coach giving non-answers at times to put off the learner. The control of this flow of the communication is managed by the learner until you get answers to the question asked. You may stick to one question, or vary it if you choose. This is not important. The purpose of the drill is important.

An example would be:

Coach uses "Start" and "That's it" as in all previous drills.

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"

Coach: "Yes".

Learner: "Good".

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"

Coach: "Why is your shirt dirty over there (points to the shirt)?"

Learner: Looks down at shirt. "It's not!"

Coach: "That's it. You didn't get my question answered. Start."

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"

Coach: "Why is your blouse dirty over there (points to the blouse)?"

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"

Coach: "Yes, today it is".

Learner: "Good".

Notice that when the coach does not answer the question and comments about the shirt, the learner does not acknowledge this and simply repeats the question. When the question is answered, an acknowledgement is given. This is the difference between getting your question answered or not.

In real life, we tend to bridge over before asking the questions again, but here we are just doing this simple drill to give us the practice. Bridging over, in a real-life communication, will be practiced later. If you were dealing with a client and were asking about their documents and they said "The traffic is terrible" you would not ignore that and repeat your question. You would acknowledge this and then continue. This is covered in the next drill. In this drill that we are doing now, we are practising a repetitive question to improve just this skill.

Any poor acknowledgement, too soft or too quick or too slow or non-answer, is given a "That's it" with an explanation and a new "Start". If the learner does something else other than simply asking the question again, such as a hesitation or a comment from the learner, is also given a "That's it", explanation and continue.

The coach should not use comments about themselves like "I have a headache" or something similar. Rather give comments back of any kind to throw the learner off their stride and to not answer the question.

The coach must balance this with actually answering the question as well of course. Start gently then get tougher later.

With all these drills, when asking a repetitive question, each time you ask it, it is as if it is the first time you have asked it. The asking of questions must not become robotic or 'on automatic'. Each time you ask it, it is a fresh new question.

After while this will be a smooth process and you will get to a good realization or new awareness and the drill would have been passed. Once the purpose of the drill is achieved the coach will give the learner a pass. The facilitator then conducts a competency assessment and once this has been passed, you may continue with the next drill.

## **CD 8: Communication Drill 8**

### **Interactive Communication**

### **Including Non-answers**

#### **Purpose of this Drill**

Now we will practice interactive communication until this is a smooth and natural skill.

This drill brings all the others together in this sequence of communication drills.

Here is a quick review of where we are:

1. You can be there comfortably.
2. You can get your communication across and use acknowledgments.
3. You can ask a question and get an answer directly. That is great.
4. Also, you can ask a question and get a "comment" that has nothing to do with your question at all.
5. You can also ask a question and get a "personal communication" from the other person that needs to be handled before getting an answer to your question.

#### **Personal Communications**

When you ask a question, the other person can answer you, or they may say something personal about themselves or their experiences, feelings, health, emotions or thoughts that they have. These are often referred to as "personal communications". The subject of the communication is about them. Things such as such as:

"I don't feel that well"

"I am quite hungry now"

"I keep wondering about the next course and if it's going to be tough"

"I am actually a bit afraid of speaking in front of other people"

"I am actually very thirsty"

"Your office is very cold. I am freezing".

"Wow, guess what, I just passed with 95% in my maths exam!"

If you are asking a question and the person comes back with a personal communication, you deal with it, handle it, then bridge back to your question and get an answer. This can be practiced until you can do it skilfully and smoothly and naturally.

NB: We are referring to a personal communication, in answer to your question and that is not an answer to your question.

### Comments

Sometimes when you ask a question, the person may come back with a comment about something that does not answer your question.

In this case you acknowledge the comment and bridge back to your original question and get it answered.

For example, you are a consultant in a bank and a client walks in and you introduce yourself and ask how you can help. The client says "Gee, the traffic is really bad today?"

This is a comment about the traffic on the roads and, in day-to-day interactions with people, this is a normal comment for someone to make in conversation. You bridge back to your question by saying something like "I agree Mrs van Heerden. It is really gets bad sometimes."  
"Mrs Van Heerden, how can I assist you?"

### How to do the Drill

As in the previous drills, you sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

The coach uses a list of personal communications to assist this drill or makes up comments as the drill progresses.

The learner asks the coach "Is the sky blue?" or "Does it rain sometimes?"

The coach answers the question and the learner acknowledges the answer.

In addition, the coach throws in a personal communication and the learner must handle this appropriately and continue with the question and get it answered.

The coach gets this going until it improves gradually and then uses comments to throw off the learner. The learner bridges back to the question by acknowledging the comment, then asks the question again.



The coach does this for a while until it improves then, switches to personal communications.

This is done back and forth until the learner can smoothly and naturally get questions answered whether the other person makes a comment or a personal communication.

The coach uses "Start" and "That's it" like all previous drills.

An incorrect handling, poor acknowledgement, mis-handling of a personal communication or comment gets a "That's it", an explanation, a new "Start" and then a repeat of the last statement.

After a while this will get smoother and smoother and you will both find your skill level higher and easier.

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"  
Coach: "Yes".  
Learner: "Good".

#### Personal Communication

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"  
Coach: "The room is getting a bit hot for me"  
Learner: "Okay. I'll switch on the fan and open the door. Is that better?"  
Coach: "Yes that's better."  
Learner: "Good. Is the sky blue?"  
Coach: "Yes."  
Learner: "Good".

#### Comment

Learner: "Is the sky blue?"  
Coach: "I see you like wearing blue."  
Learner: "That's true. Is the sky blue?"  
Coach: "Yes."  
Learner: "Good".

Take up personal communications first and get to a good point. Then switch to comments and then get to a good point as well. Then once you have reached a good point on both, now just do the drill and use comments or personal communications at any time until the learner deals with them as they come up, and deals with them skilfully.

If you get into difficulty, cut back the gradient to an earlier good point and continue forward from there, or consult your facilitator.

Keep going with the drill until you have achieved a new level of skill or realization, then the drill is passed by the coach, who then gets the facilitator to conduct a competency assessment for a final pass.

At this point, you will have practiced all parts of the communication sequence and your overall communication skills will be much improved.

The final drill will be a conversational drill that combines all parts of all drills so far! It may not require only questions to be answered correctly but will include a normal flow of communication that you will deal with every day of your life, in business or socially.

## **CD 9: Communication Drill 9**

### **Interactive Communication**

### **Conversational**

#### **Purpose of this Drill**

Now we will practice interactive communication until this is a smooth and natural skill, but this time we will not only focus on getting questions answered or managing comments and personal communications.

This drill uses a free flow of conversation that may include anything from the previous drills.

This drill once again brings all the others together and is the final drill in this sequence of communication drills.

Now, in addition to the previous drill involving comments and personal communications, you may just speak to the other person about any subject, but not necessarily by asking questions. This free-flowing conversation needs to be handled using all the skills you have learned so far.

#### **How to do the Drill**

As in the previous drills, you sit opposite your study partner as before. One is the coach and one the learner. The coach says "Start" to start the drill and to end the drill says "That's it". There are two reasons to say "That's it". One is to end the drill for a break, such as lunch or teatime, and the other is to correct the learner.

The learner starts a conversation, with the coach, of his or her own creation.

The coach uses "Start" and "That's it" the same as all previous drills.

The learner gets an interactive conversation going and adds a comment on occasion, a personal communication on occasion, and then takes the conversation back to a free-flowing interaction.

While the learner is doing the drill with the coach participating, the coach looks for and stops the process when the learner drops out acknowledgements, or does not get their communication across or misses any of the skills gained from all the drills up to this point.

This is done until the learner can smoothly and naturally keep a conversation going using all aspects of the communication sequence, as described earlier in all previous drills and in this course.

Once this is achieved and you have achieved a new level of skill with a realization of this skill and your competence, the drill is passed by the coach who then gets to facilitator to conduct a final competency assessment for a final pass.

An incorrect use of the communications skills learned so far gets a "That's it", an explanation, a new "Start" and then a repeat of the last part of the conversation where the error occurred. Once corrected, the conversation is continued.

After a while this will get smoother and smoother and you will both find your skill level higher and easier. The learner and coach should start with an easy conversation, and as you progress, add a bit more detail, until you get to a good point.

As a suggestion, the learner can take on the role of a university lecturer or high school teacher and have a conversation about how the other person (the coach) is progressing in their studies. This conversation can go back and forth around various subjects the learner is studying.

This is an example:

Firstly, work with your study partner and go through this example and notice each part of this conversation such as acknowledgments, half-acknowledgments, comments and so on.

Learner: "Hello Sipho. How are you doing?"

Coach: "Hello Mr Simon, I am doing fine thank you."

Learner: "I am glad to hear it. Do you mind if we talk a little bit about how you are progressing with your studies?"

Coach: "Not at all. That would be a good idea. Thanks."

Learner: "I noticed you improved in your maths exams recently. What did you do to improve so much?"

Coach: "Yes that's true. I was very proud of that. I basically took up some extra lessons after school and put in the time to make sure I improved."

Learner: "Uhhh?"

Coach: "Yes, it was hard at first but then after a few days I started getting into it and saw where I was going wrong".

Learner: "That's interesting. What did you find out?"

Coach: "Ow. (The coach makes a sound as if he or she is in a bit of pain). My arm is giving me a bit of trouble".

Learner: "I am sorry. Are you okay to continue? What happened to your arm?"

Coach: "That's it. You asked me two questions at once. Start.  
'Ow. My arm is giving me a bit of trouble'."

Learner: "I am sorry. Are you okay to continue?"

Coach: "Yes I am fine. The pain just comes and goes quickly. No problem."

Learner: "Okay, so I am interested in what you found out that you were doing wrong in maths?"

Coach: "I was getting confused between the various subjects in maths and not really understanding the use of the subject."

Learner; "That's great. What about your progress in English. How is that going?"

Coach: "That is going normally and I think I don't need extra lessons there. Shew, I am glad".

Learner: (Quite quickly) What about Science?"

Coach: "That's it. You did not acknowledge my last comment and jumped into the next question very quickly. Start.  
'That is going normally and I think I don't need extra lessons there. Shew, I am glad'.

Learner: (Smiles). I agree. "Thank goodness! Now, how about Science?"

Coach: "Science is total horse manure! I can't stand the subject and I think we should just skip that question all together!!" (a bit angry).

Learner: (eyes a bit wide and laughs at coach). "Wow! You are pissed off hey!?"

Coach: "That's it. Confront went out. Start.  
'Science is total horse manure! I can't stand the subject and I think we should just skip that question all together!!' (a bit angry)".

Learner: "Well that's interesting Siph. Science wasn't my best, but what exactly is it about the subject that you feel so strongly about?"

Coach: (Notices it is lunch time) "That's it. Excellent progress. Well done! Let's go to lunch".

**NB:** The facilitator has a challenge monitoring this drill because of its complexity compared to other drills. When you start the drill, let your facilitator know what your conversation is about, so they can follow the interaction.

You and your coach may start the drill, but when the facilitator arrives at your space, the coach must make sure, as well as the facilitator, that the facilitator knows what the drill subject is about.

Start the drill in an easy manner and keeping it simple at first, and work it up to a higher level of skill as you progress.

Switch your roles as coach and learner to alternate the drill. Take on different roles such as a landlord or a friend or anything. Use your imagination. The facilitator must be aware of the need for switching roles.

Get assistance from your facilitator where needed.

The idea is not to achieve some idea of perfection, but to practice this until you are comfortable with this. In normal life we sometime stumble on a word, or back-track after an error, and that is fine.

You will know when you have achieved the final result. It will feel easy and natural.

Once passed, you will have practiced all parts of the communication sequence and your overall communication skills will be much improved. Well done and good luck.

## **A note on the origin of this material**

We have drawn on a wide variety of wise people to compile this overall communication material. As can be seen, the material goes back to the earliest written records on the subject.

The practical use of the communication sequence as written up here, in this drills booklet, is inspired by a similar set of drills created by L. Ron Hubbard but is not his set of drills. Some of our drills closely reflect Hubbard's drills but our drills are to be viewed as a set in themselves. Our drills are specifically for use in our programs to make people work-ready and more proficient in social interactive skills. [The vast majority of whom are English-second-language speakers]. We have added drills that assist us in our efforts to provide workplace skills. The language and style of our presentation of our drills is unique to us. Our drills are not in any way intended to be a duplicate of Hubbard's drills.

We appreciate the work Hubbard did to make his drills workable and for his inspiration for our set of drills. He has written extensively on the subject of communication and often his material is directed at the training of counsellors, whereas our material is completely focused on creating workplace skills. Applied Scholastics International websites can be accessed for further information covering his writings on this subject.