

Better Connect with the People that Matter

“CLAP” and Non-Verbal Communication



As social animals, we need strong connections to lead fulfilling lives. We can exist without many things, but we will never thrive without meaningful connections with others.

The strength of our connections, however, depends on the strength of our communication with those who matter to us. Yet, interpersonal communication can be difficult. When two or more people converse they inevitably bring their different perspectives, backgrounds and ideas with them. These differences can impede a healthy, honest dialogue. Some conversations end in conflict. Others never happen because we avoid them.

It doesn't need to be this difficult! There are ways to overcome these common challenges and have more effective conversations.

There is much that can be done and I would like to recommend the first step. Increasing our awareness about the **things that are in our personal control**.

CLARITY

First, look inward and be clear with yourself about what message you want to transmit. What is truly important to you? What is important about this specific relationship? Why is it important to have a conversation on this topic? You can't be clear to others unless you are clear first with yourself.

Then, look externally. Make sure the message you are transmitting includes all of the information that is relevant—and in a way that the other person can understand it.

LISTENING

Listen with the intent to understand, not with the intent to reply. True listening means shifting our awareness from ourselves. Instead of thinking “how does this relate to me?” consider “what is this person trying to tell me?”

- ▶ Be curious about what the other person is saying.
- ▶ Say Less and ask more. Permit the wisdom of silence to be present.
- ▶ Paraphrase what you have heard to ensure you understand them.
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions: who, where, when, what, etc.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are the source of many miscommunications. **Simply don't make them.** If something is important to you, don't assume that the other person knows—and understands—what you mean.

PERSPECTIVES

Our perspective is affected by our needs and wants, our culture, values, gender, age, and by the society in which we live. **Truth is subjective.** We all see “truth” differently, according to our subjective perspectives.

Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. When talking, use statements with “I,” such as, “this is what I feel,” and “from my understanding.”

NON-VERBAL

Remember that **communication is much more than words.** What you are *not* saying—your body language, gestures, eye contact (or lack of), tone of voice, energy level and/or indifference—also communicates a lot. (This is why digital communication often complicates things even more!)

Would you like to learn more? Do you need help preparing for an important conversation? Email me at claudia@aronowitz.ca.

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