



# *How to Improve Communication at Work*

## *Guide and Worksheet*

———— **RABBI SHLOMO SLATKIN, MS, LCPC** ————

[www.themarriagerestorationproject.com](http://www.themarriagerestorationproject.com)

# ***Introduction***

Communication in the workplace is essential for employee engagement.

Effective and safe communication protocols can change the very culture of a company, promote greater productivity, and save valuable resources. If communication is not safe, we can't be mentally and emotionally available to hear what the other is saying as we are too busy being defensive. Company culture is so crucial because a happy workplace is a successful workplace. The more people want to come to work, the more productive they will be.

The following worksheets are going to provide tips and techniques for you to be able to enhance healthy communication at work which in turn will foster trust and wellbeing, where all people can feel respected and valued.

No doubt when you use the following tools, you'll notice drastic improvement not only at work but in all of your relationships as well!

With best wishes for your relationship success,  
Rabbi Shlomo Slatkin, M.S., LCPC

Communication is at the heart of all that is important in all relationships. At work, when good communication is lacking, one starts to hear terms like – workplace culture, diversity, inclusion, emotional intelligence- all laudable goals but stemming from a missing core ingredient- effective workplace communication. When you fix the root cause, you get everything you want.

## ***Good Communication Matters***

Companies are becoming more aware that they need to know how to optimally communicate with their employees, teams, and customers for maximum change and growth.

### ***Importance of communications skills at work***

**GOOD COMMUNICATION RESOLVES CONFLICT.**

**GOOD COMMUNICATION INCREASES WORKPLACE HARMONY.**

**GOOD COMMUNICATION PROMOTES PRODUCTIVITY.**

### ***Tips for Improving Communication Skills at Work***

**Work on your  
emotional  
intelligence**

**Practice self-  
awareness**

**Make room for  
others to  
speak**

**Practice active  
listening**

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## ***#1 Tip for Respectful Workplace Communication***

My number #1 tip for achieving respectful communication in the workplace is learning how to mirror. This means allowing one person to talk and reflecting back what they said as close to verbatim as possible without any response or critique. This creates an open atmosphere of psychological safety which encourages creativity and team building.

### ***Additionally, you'll want to:***

**Eliminate all name-calling, finger-pointing, blaming, and shaming.**

**Take ownership for your feelings and frustration by focusing on why your co-worker's actions disturb you. Replace the “you” of “you always do this” with “I” – “how I felt when...”.**

**Learn to ask for what you want. It's so easy to complain that we often forget what it is we are missing.**

## MIRRORING

- Mirroring is essentially repeating back what you heard the other person say. You can paraphrase a little to sound more natural but best practice is to repeat what you heard the other person say.

• "I'm really frustrated because this report is not of the quality that I wanted to see nor does it fulfill the requirements"

• "What I'm hearing you say is that the report I handed in is not what you were looking for. Have I got that right?"

- Hopefully you can see from the above example how mirroring helps the person on the receiving end of criticism not feel the need to be defensive because he/she is simply repeating back what was said.
- Mirroring can also help the sender hear their tone of voice or their choice of words which may not have been the best choice. Sometimes just being heard will help the sender calm down.

### *"IS NOW A GOOD TIME?"*

- Get into the habit of asking if now is a good time
- Before you want to share or offer constructive feedback or talk with someone else, asking them "Is not a good time" will set the tone for the other to be ready to "receive" you when they are in the proper frame of mind. People tend to get reactive or feel defensive if they were caught "off-guard" or perhaps weren't ready to have a conversation or listen.

# Worksheet

## ACTIVE LISTENING WORKSHEET

Active listening is a means of active engagement with another person. It is the process of listening attentively. The goal is for the speaker to be heard, and understood.

YES

NO

Do you consider listening to be a skill?

☐☐

Do you ask questions to clarify anything you do not understand or to check that you have received the message clearly?

☐☐

Do you reflect the other person's body language?

☐☐

Do you avoid filling silence if the other person does not immediately answer a question?

☐☐

Do you focus your attention on the individual you are speaking to rather than yourself?

☐☐

Do you wait until the person has finished speaking before saying something?

☐☐

### WHAT COULD I DO TO IMPROVE MY ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS?

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### HABITS TO BREAK FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

- Being absorbed in your own thoughts
- Not showing respect to the speaker
- Not making eye contact
- Distracted
- Pretending to pay attention

# Worksheet

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YES

NO

Do you usually prefer to ask questions rather than offer opinions?

☐☐

Do you have a habit of asking closed rather than open questions?

☐☐

Do you ask you questions in a manner that is both relaxed and objective?

☐☐

Do you ask clear and transparent questions?

☐☐

Do you think about whether the questions you've asked have had the desired effect?

☐☐

WHAT COULD I DO TO IMPROVE MY QUESTIONING SKILLS?

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## MORE TIPS FOR IMPROVING WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION: PAY ATTENTION

- Put away your phone, turn off the TV, and stop checking emails.
- Use verbal and non-verbal communication.

### VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- “mm-hmm” / “uh-huh”
- “that’s interesting”
- “that makes sense”
- “I understand”
- “Keep going”

### NON- VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- nodding in agreement
- reacting to emotional content (e.g. smiling)
- eye contact
- gestures, posture, and body language

## ENCOURAGE SHARING

- Ask open-ended questions

- “What is it like to \_\_\_\_?”
- “How did you feel when \_\_\_\_?”
- “Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_?”
- “How do you \_\_\_\_?”
- “What do you like about \_\_\_\_?”
- “What are your thoughts about \_\_\_\_”

## USE REFLECTIONS

Reflection can quickly help you become a better listener. When reflecting, you will repeat back what someone has just said to you, but in your own words. This shows that you didn’t just hear the other person, but you are trying to understand them.

Speaker:

*“I just don’t understand my boss. One minute he says one thing and the next minute he says the opposite.”*

Listener:

*“You feel very confused by him?”*





**If you still experience poor communication at work, the best approach is to do an in-house training so that everyone implements these new protocols instead of singling out the poor communicators and putting them on the defensive.**

**Talk with us about a workplace training on communication.**

## Resources:

- <https://themarriagerestorationproject.com/effective-communication-for-workplaces/>
- <https://www.betterup.com/blog/why-communication-is-key-to-workplace-and-how-to-improve-skills>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/communication-exercises-for-work/>
- <https://mentalhealthworksheets.com/benefits-of-active-listening/>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-active-listening-3024343>
- Google's Project Aristotle
- Amy Edmondson on Psychological Safety in the Workplace
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/communication-problems-couples-companies-2019-2>

## Contact Us

*Speak to a Marriage Counselor at  
The Marriage Restoration Project*



443.570.7598



rabbishlomoslatkin@gmail.com

*Book a time to talk*

[www.themarriagerestorationproject.com](http://www.themarriagerestorationproject.com)