



**Proven Techniques
You Can Use
to
Be An Effective
Communicator**

**A Pocket Reference Book
By Sylvia Henderson**

Introduction

Seems like the busiest people are most aware of their own personal development.

Since you are one of these busy people, this tips booklet gives you information you can use immediately to develop your communication skills.

When you diet (or try to gain weight) you do not try something new every day. A lasting change comes about when you initiate a new step once a week and practice every day. Eventually, real behavior change—that lasts—becomes a part of you.

These tips are specific actions you can take to improve or fine-tune specific skills. Take them one week at a time. In time and with patience, you should observe a measurable improvement in your communication skills.

Good luck on your journey!

Table of Contents

The Words You Say	4
Speech Patterns	5
Your Voice as a Tool	6
Empathize, Clarify, & Understand	7
Active Listening	8
Body Language	9
Small Talk	10
Giving and Receiving Feedback	11
Conflict	12
Meetings	13
Written Communication (E-Mail)	14
Resources for Further Study	15
10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business	16
With This Booklet	16

The Words You Say

- 1 Keep words positive. Use “perhaps” instead of “cannot”; “could” instead of “should”; “challenge” instead of “problem”.
- 2 Kick the “but...” “Yes, but...” cancels the positive and alerts the listener to be wary of what comes next.
- 3 Use short, exact words. Try “pen” instead of “writing implement”; “couch” instead of “ottoman”; “truck” instead of “semi tractor-trailer”.
- 4 Oust “of the”. Consider “open the door” instead of “opening of the door”; “write the report” instead of “writing of the report”.
- 5 Encourage rather than discourage. Tell someone “I believe you can...”
- 6 Generate confidence instead of insecurity. Offer “We will accomplish this together by...”
- 7 Give praise and show appreciation. Mean it and make sure praise and appreciation are specific and sincere.
- 8 Refer to a thesaurus for alternate words. This helps expand your vocabulary.
- 9 Lead the conversation toward a specific conclusion or agreement without being rude and abrupt.

“No one would talk much in society if he knew how often he misunderstands others.”
— *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, *Elective Affinities*

Body Language

- 39 Lean forward a little. You look more attentive when your body leans toward the speaker.
- 40 Open your personal space. Keep hands and arms un-folded.
- 41 Make yourself approachable. Smile. Make eye contact. Act “naturally” rather than stiffly or exaggeratedly.
- 42 Move with purpose. Avoid jerky, quick, or repetitive movements. They make you appear nervous or anxious.
- 43 Maintain socially-acceptable grooming standards—cleanliness, moderate fragrances, hair, jewelry and clothing that does not distract.
- 44 Honor others’ personal space. 1.5feet-to-4feet is considered American culture’s personal space.
- 45 Give a firm, dry, warm handshake. Shake two or three times, then relax your grip and gently pull your hand away to end the handshake.
- 46 The higher plane implies power. Standing when others are sitting implies that the person standing has the power. Sitting higher than others implies the person sitting higher has the power.
- 47 Appear confident when you enter a room. Establish good posture, stride with a purpose, and keep your head and shoulders erect.
- 48 “Mirror” the other person’s body language using motions and holding your stance as they do.

Small Talk

- 49 Be brief. Make only two or three statements before pausing to let the other person speak.
- 50 Keep conversations high-level. Deep feelings and stories are inappropriate.
- 51 Avoid controversial topics and opinions. A rule of thumb is no politics, religion, sex, money, inappropriate humor and generalizations.
- 52 Pick up on key words. For example – if the speaker mentions a hobby, draw out more information by asking about the hobby.
- 53 Refuse to gossip, complain, pass rumors, or otherwise engage in negative comments.
- 54 Ask who, what, when, where, why, and sometimes, how.
- 55 Identify a characteristic with which you can relate or on which you can comment without prejudice or offense. For example—mutual acquaintances, food, occupation, vacation, or interest.
- 56 Adopt an ending you can use to close most conversations. For example—“Enjoy the rest of your [morning/day/evening].”
- 57 Smile. Smiling sets people at ease.
- 58 Open your suit jacket if you are wearing one to relay the message that you are being open and honest.