



# If you can't communicate, you can't lead

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If you are a leader or you are aspiring to be a leader, you need to know this: People will not follow you if they don't know what you want or where you are going. And the only way you can achieve these two things is to effectively communicate. If communicating is a challenge for you, then you've come to the right column. Here are four basic truths you need to be aware of in order to become an effective communicator:

1) *Simplify your message.* Many leaders' messages are often complicated, leading to confusion or hesitation. The key to communication is simplicity. Avoid big words and complex sentences and be extremely clear in your points.

2) *See the audience.* Effective communicators focus on the people with whom they're communicating. It is

impossible to effectively communicate to an audience without knowing something about them. Certainly know the reason the audience is present--they could have an objective or agenda. Or perhaps they need questions answered. Maybe they have to accomplish something. Whatever the reason, you must become audience oriented when communicating.

3) *Be truthful.* Credibility precedes great communication. There are two ways to convey credibility to your audience. First, they have to believe what you say. They will believe you if you're fired up with conviction. Second, live what you preach. There is no greater credibility than conviction in action.

4) *Seek a response.* In most instances, the goal of communication is action. If you dump too much information on people, real communication gets lost

in the details. Every time you speak to people, give them something to feel, something to remember, and something to do.

If you adhere to these four basic truths, you can go a long way as a communicator and leader. To master these truths, read and study books written by great communicators--they give away a lot of their communication secrets in their books. Also take advantage of any opportunity to listen to great communicators in action, paying attention to their voice, eyes, gestures, and message. Notice how they take something complicated and make it simple. Note everything about them that made them memorable to you.

As you continually improve your ability to communicate, you will be improving your effectiveness as a leader.

~ The End ~