Leveraging Your Nonverbal Skills

As we learned earlier in the presentation with the definition and examples of nonverbal cues, we know we are always communicating even when we are not speaking. Take a moment and scan the room, glance at the people around you and make note of what you see. What are people expressing with their actions? What are you expressing with your actions? In this section, we will touch on ways to use our nonverbal skills more effectively.

Self Awareness

For us to use our nonverbal skill to advantage, we must first become self-aware. This is about how we show our feelings, thoughts, and attitudes which are being expressed outwardly, some unconsciously. Becoming self-aware will help you to understand yourself as well as others. As you learn about your actions and their triggers, keep a record and you will discover when you are using negative versus positive reactions and how to gain control. These triggers may be the same for others and will be easier for you to spot once you have learned about your own.

Harmonize

Once you have learned your triggers, it will be important that your nonverbal cues pair with what you are saying. While your verbal communication may sound positive, your facial expressions can say otherwise. It is easy enough to tell someone you are having a great day but the scowl on your face can say different. This may cause mistrust, conflict, and possible confusion in the ones you are speaking to. Keep in mind your nonverbal cues can affect the results of your interaction and quite possibly in a negative way.

Interpreting Others

Once we have learned to pay attention to ourselves and how we can utilize positive reactions, we must also learn how to interpret others. Author Stephen R. Covey’s book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”, mentions Habit Number Five: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood. This habit is not only relevant to verbal communication. Body language is equally important to watch and acknowledge, as it is to express. This helps validate what is being spoken. Mirroring is a great way to show you understand what the other person is saying. It is as the word suggests. When you match an individual’s movements or expressions, you are showing that you are listening and giving feedback at the same time. This demonstrates empathy and tells others that you care about what is being said.

Conclusion

Today during our presentation, we have learned a lot through the definition of nonverbal communication. Some great examples were given, the importance of nonverbal cues, and how to use them. We also learned that nonverbal cues account for 60-75% of our communication. With this in mind, remain self-aware, walk tall, hands where they will be seen, make eye contact, and demonstrate your self-esteem in the greatest possible manner. Acknowledge,

empathize, and allow people to seek trust in you. Soon all that is learned will become second nature. And remember nonverbal communication is a valuable soft skill to help balance hard skills, a particular key to success.

References

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