

UNSKILLFUL COMMUNICATION TACTICS

- Unskillful interactions unnecessarily damage the relationship often unintentionally and are frequently used when the person feels unheard or out of options. They often turn up the volume out of frustration.
 - Shoulds and Oughts (Commands)
 - Always / Nevers (Superlatives)
 - A Good Person (Comparatives)
 - A Right Minded Person (Judgementalism)
 - Mindreading / Shouldn't have to tell (Expected behavior)
 - Attributions of Intent / You meant it (Attributions)
 - You do it too / What about...(Deflection)
 - The data indicates... (Intellectualizing)
 - Spill Over / Kicking the Dog (Emotional misplacement)
 - Tit for Tat (Mercantile)
 - Go ahead hurt me / If you loved me ... (Victimization)
 - Well what about X, Y, Z (Flooding)
 - All or Nothing Thinking / Rush to Offense (Reductionism)
 - Personal attacks / You're a _____ (Criticism)
 - Passive aggressiveness / retaliation (Emotional manipulation)
 - Catastrophizing (Slippery Slope)
 - Everyone knows that ... (Bandwagon)
 - My Momma Says / God expects (Appeal to Authority)
 - Bringing a third party in to the discussion (Triangulation)
 - Exposing personal information without consent (Outing)
 - Blame shifting / Gas lighting (Shifting)
 - Yelling / Storming Out / Explosiveness (Dysregulation)
 - Lets see how you like it ... (Counter attacking)
 - Zingers / Low Blows / Name Calling (Ad hominem)
 - Your worthless / without me your nothing (Shaming)
 - Emotional Cutoff (Stonewalling)
 - Physicality / Intimidation / Controlling / DV (Abuse)

Unskillful interactions are not helpful. Disagreements and conflict can be handled skillfully, without unskillfulness. Turn complaints into statements of feelings and values and reasonable requests.

Skillful Communication Skills

- With effort a skillful response can be found to nearly every potential circumstance that helps respect the other person and support the relationship.
 - Reasonable requests (Consent)
 - “I Statements” when sharing (Expression Skills)
 - “You Feel ___” / Reflective Listening (Understanding Skills)
 - One subject at a time (On Topic)
 - “Will You?” asking for what you want (Direct communications)
 - Checking Attributions (Verifying Meaning)
 - Own inventory / My part is ... (Taking Responsibility)
 - Being Specific (Narrow focus)
 - Time outs / Self Calming / Acknowledge (Emotional Regulation)
 - Repair attempts (Turning Toward)
 - Putting your self in their perspective (Empathy)
 - Thinking and planning important conversations (Deliberateness)

 - Looking for multiple perspectives (Openness)
 - Start with the Good (Affirming)
 - Do overs / Repair attempts (Reengaging)
 - Remaining in the present (Mindfulness)
 - Naming affirming other’s values, priorities (Values)
 - Joint decision making (We Focus)
 - Personal engagement directly even when difficult (Boundaries)
 - Respecting confidences and requests (Loyalty/Fidelity)
 - Acknowledging faults mistakes without justification (Integrity)
 - Using safe words and skillful disengagement (Crisis Mgt)
 - Accepting life’s difficulties, suffering & unfairness (Acceptance)
 - Avoid trigger words and freaky buttons (Respect)
 - Attributions / Praise / Gratitude (Attributions)
 - Skillful boundary making as needed (Limits)
 - Confronting directly violations of consent or respect (Advocacy)
 - Personal safety / reporting abuse / self advocacy (Self Care)
 - Evaluating stress and priorities: Scale 0-10 (Priority Identification)

Transform unskillful communication tactics to Skillful communication skills. Use expression and understanding skills. When one person feels defensive, the other person doesn't feel understood.