



# Geared for Success

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## Your Secret Weapon – Non-Verbal Communication

Throughout the pandemic, we have been challenged to communicate in unique and different ways. New platforms have replaced in person interactions—sometimes seeing each other as a small square on a screen, sometimes not. Limited in person work environments have changed the ways we effectively engage. Non-verbal communication has been altered with masks as we struggle to read messages through eyes, forehead expressions, body language, gestures and movement.

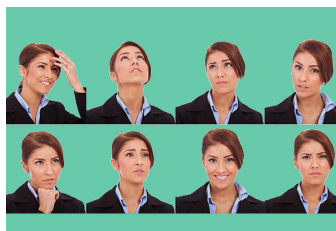
Having command of your non-verbal communication can be powerful in not only getting your message across, but in providing feedback to others. During interactions we are continuously giving and receiving wordless signals. According to the research of Edward G. Wertheim, Ph.D., nonverbal communication can play five roles:

- **Repetition** – It strengthens and repeats the message you are making verbally.
- **Substitution** – It can substitute for a verbal message. For example, nodding your head means agreement or “yes”.
- **Accenting** – It can accentuate your message. For example, moving your arms may emphasize your passion about your topic.
- **Complementing** – It may add to your verbal message. For example, giving someone a “high five” in celebrating something good.
- **Contradiction** – It can show the opposite of what your words are saying which means someone may or may not believe you are telling the truth.

Your ability to connect with others is deeply dependent on your non-verbal

communication skills. If you want to be a better communicator, this is an important skill to continue to develop. Well intentioned people can struggle to build strong relationships when this skill is lacking. Your non-verbal communication skills let others know you care, provide signals to tell if you are being truthful and show whether you are listening. In short, they build trust, rapport and respect.

During communication, non-verbal



messages are rapidly flowing back and forth. As leaders and professionals, we need to concentrate on the following key areas to develop, increase or leverage our non-verbal skill levels:

- **Be Fully Present** – Non-verbal messages may be very subtle. If you are thinking of your “to do” list, checking your phone, or distracted in any other way, you are missing communication cues. Stay focused and engaged in conversations.
- **Develop your Emotional Self - Awareness** – Are you aware of your own emotions? Emotional Self-Awareness, one of the fifteen competencies of Emotional Intelligence, is foundational in understanding the signals you are giving others. Do you understand how deep and why you are feeling in certain situations? Reflect on a regular basis on what is happening in your own heart and head.

- **Learn to Manage Your Stress** – Stress changes the ways in which we communicate. It can alter how you interpret and misread others. It can make a bad situation worse by changing our equilibrium. Utilize stress coping strategies on a regular basis, understand ways to calm yourself and realize the impact your stress has on whether or not someone truly wants to communicate with you.

- **Build Your Empathy** – Empathy is being able to accurately assess how someone might be feeling. To develop empathy, read faces, listen and think of what is appropriate to say. It is a complex competency that takes caring, time and concentration.

- **Observe Role Models Who are Talented in Non-Verbal Communication** – Watch someone you admire for having excellent
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**“These days, we must learn to read eyes, tone of voice and posture to see what is going on behind the mask.”**

Sharlene Breakey

## Your Secret Weapon—Non-Verbal Communication

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relationships. No doubt they have also mastered many of the skills needed for non-verbal communication. What do they do? Why does it make a difference?

Your non-verbal communication can provide an invitation to talk, expand a discussion and let someone else know their thinking matters. As leaders this enables us to establish inclusive work environments that can lead to innovation and forward thinking. Taking the time to check our own and others non-verbal messages is a powerful strategy for leading and developing others.

Resource: "Nonverbal Communication and Body Language", by Jeanne Segal, Melinda Smith, Lawrence Robinson and Greg Boose

**"Few realize how loud their expressions really are. Be kind with what you wordlessly say."**

Richelle E. Goodrich, Author

## 10 Leadership Gifts to Give to Your Team

As another year comes to a close and the holiday season is upon us, I have compiled a list of 10 leadership gifts to share with your team. As you are reading them, think about the answer to this question "What do you want to be remembered for?". Each of us leaves a legacy of our actions.

1. **The Gift of Listening to ALL Members of the Team.** Seeking information from all-- not just a few members. Being a focused and inclusive leader.
2. **The Gift of Impulse Control.** Thinking before you speak, stopping yourself from hurtful comments that can damage relationships and withholding judgment before you hear all of the information.
3. **The Gift of Mentoring.** Shaping the skills of others through feedback to develop careers and optimize individual skills, knowledge and abilities.



4. **The Gift of Communicating Regularly.** Keeping the team informed helps to enhance productivity, boost problem solving, and fosters retention. Don't forget the importance of one-on-one conversations.
5. **The Gift of Trusting, not Micromanaging.** I recently had a coachee say, "When criticized and micromanaged, you forget what your skills are." Being able to step aside and let people do their jobs sets a solid foundation for team development.
6. **The Gift of Bridging.** Being able to bring individuals and groups together to accomplish a bigger, better solution.
7. **The Gift of Compassion.** Compassion isn't judgment or agreement. It is understanding that life and work sometimes overlap.
8. **The Gift of Being Courageous.** Standing up for what is right, just and fair. Showing your integrity when it is needed most.
9. **The Gift of Recognition.** Showing gratitude through your actions and words in sincere and genuine ways.
10. **The Gift of Shared Vision.** Reinforcing the big picture vision and how it supports the work being done.

## Starburst Brainstorming

Are you looking for some new options for problem solving with your team or to use individually? The Starbursting technique encourages teams to systematically think through all angles of a problem with the use of questions.

1. **To begin, draw a six-pointed star.**
2. **At the center of the star, write the challenge or opportunity you are facing.** At each point of the star, write the words: who, what, where, when, why and how.



3. **Possible questions for your brainstorm are:**
  - a. **Who** – Who is impacted by this problem? Who will work on this project? Who has done work on this before? Who else should be involved?
  - b. **What** – What factors should we consider? What will make a difference? What key issues are involved? What do we need to be successful? What will be the short/long term impacts?
  - c. **When** – When should we begin working on the project? When should we ask for support and resources?
  - d. **Why** – Why is this important? Why wasn't it done before? Why should we address this now?
  - e. **How** – How will we go about making this happen? How can we get buy-in? How does this fit into the vision of the organization? How will we take our initial steps?
4. **Starbursting guides and prompts teams to think thoroughly through all aspects of a problem or challenge.** The questions provide a structure to help people focus on an integral solution.

Resource: "19 Top Brainstorming Techniques to Generate Ideas for Every Situation", by Lisa Jo Rudy

## What to Say – Empathetic Responses

During situations where leaders need to demonstrate an empathetic response, many are struck silent. They say nothing because they fear saying the wrong thing. Being able to communicate understanding is critical for being a trusted, compassionate leader. Empathy is a choice. It is acknowledging the place where someone is at. And, then making a sincere connection that is genuine and from the heart.

Below are some examples of empathetic responses from the article, “Powerful Examples of Empathy Statements”, by Kate Miller-Wilson.

- **Acknowledge their pain/struggle**
  - “I am sorry you are going through this.”
  - “I can hear in your voice that it is really difficult for you.”
  - “I can see how you would be upset.”
- **Share how you feel**
  - “Some things in life don’t really make sense.”
  - “I don’t know what to say.”
  - “I cannot imagine what you are going through.”
- **Show gratitude that the person opened up**

## EMPATHY



- “Thank you for letting me know.”
- “I am glad you told me.”
- “This must be hard to talk about. Thanks for opening up to me.”
- **Be supportive**
  - “What do you need right now?”
  - “My door/phone line is open to you.”
  - “I am here for you.”

In a leadership role, you will encounter difficult, life-changing situations (e.g. death of loved ones, cancer, medical treatments, etc.) from your team members. How you respond can truly make a difference in people’s lives. Your empathy (or lack of) will be on full display and will be a part of your legacy. Always listen first without judgment. Then, think about how you would feel in this situation. Use the meaningful phrases listed above, an appropriate voice tone and speak from your heart.

**“If there is one secret of success, it is the ability to get another person’s point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.”**

Henry Ford

## When Mistakes are Made Use the “IDEALS Script” to Coach

Stretch opportunities, empowerment and thought-filled delegation provide development to your team members. However, the more challenging the tasks you assign your staff, the greater the chance that mistakes may be made. Giving constructive feedback allows errors to be addressed and staff to be held accountable. The message also needs to be effective and accepted by the staff member.

The “IDEALS Script” focuses on a structured way to discuss errors. In [Hundred Precenters - Challenge Your Employees to Give It Their All and They’ll Give You Even More](#), by Mark Murphy, the author introduces the “IDEALS Script” as a way of explaining how to avoid future mistakes while having a non-threatening, nonjudgmental conversation. Try using this method for your next coaching conversation.

- **Invite them to partner** - Open the dialogue in a sincere way by asking, “Let’s have a conversation about \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever went wrong) and work through it together.” Then, listen carefully.
- **Disarm yourself** - From the very beginning of the conversation, convey the message that you will not use any

“weapons of communication” such as anger, shouting, sarcasm, etc. Tell the person the conversation will be two way and constructive.

- **Eliminate the blame** - Finger pointing won’t be helpful in getting the message across.
- **Affirm their control** - During the meeting, periodically say open ended questions like “Tell me more”, “What other events happened?”, etc. to show you value the person’s thoughts and feelings. People become defensive when they feel that they have no control over their situation.



- **List correct feedback** - Provide feedback that is logical, sensible and understandable. Give sufficient information to educate the staff member on how to avoid the mistake in the future. Make it clear that everyone in your area needs to be accountable to the organization

and the team.

- **Synchronize your understanding** - End the conversation by making this open ended statement: “Tell me how you think we can work together to build on this and make things even more effective next time.” This is better than, “Do you understand what I want you to do next time?” Keep your closing statement open ended to enable the staff member to demonstrate that they clearly understand the message.

## Celebrate Being Back Together as A Team in 2022!

Great training options are available for bringing your team together! Benefits to team training include:

- **Maximizing your team's strengths**
- **Gaining momentum in the new year.**
- **Re-establishing your office culture.**
- **Introducing team members who were hired during the pandemic and lack connection with the team.**

Contact Jan Hovrud ( [jhovrud@training-werks.com](mailto:jhovrud@training-werks.com) or 435-647-0516) for more information about how training and professional coaching can make a difference with your team.

Don't delay – calendars are filling!

**It's Time to Reconnect, Collaborate and Work Together!**



**“The words you speak become the house you live in.”**

Hafiz

### Increasing Flexibility in Problem Solving

Seeing someone else's viewpoint in problem solving can be challenging and difficult. If you are strongly opinionated or passionate you may not spend much time listening to the other person or accepting alternative options. Rather, you are busy mentally preparing rebuttals. This can not only cause others to perceive you as rigid and inflexible but may not lead to the best solution. To reduce this tendency, try the following techniques:

- When you first approach a problem, remind yourself that there are many possible solutions.
- Watch for “snap” reactions. Stop yourself from assuming the first alternative that enters your mind is the best solution.



- Look for opportunities to “bridge” the best features of several solutions.
- If you have difficulty seeing the value of another person's viewpoint, mentally reverse sides to see if you can come up with ideas that support that person's position.
- Use brainstorming techniques with your team to find alternatives that will build a collaborative problem solving environment.
- Be cognizant of your behavior. Do you take over the problem solving conversation? If so, step back and let others have the floor to speak.

Resource: [Successful Manager's Handbook](#), by Personnel Decisions, Inc.

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