COLUMN | COMMUNICATION

The Cornerstone of Effective Communication... Listening

With daily practice with your family, friends and business acquaintances, this can be your *cornerstone to effective communication.*

by **George Madiou**

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Unless you live on a deserted island all by yourself, effective communication is one of those essential skill sets for a fulfilling life. Some people think communicating is just talking *at* someone. That works if you're on that deserted island talking to a coconut!

Some people think that effective communication is all about *them*. How interesting *they* are or how *they* are so smart *they* can win just about any argument. This is the furthest thing from effective communication.

> ***The key, or as I like to put it, the cornerstone of effective communication is listening. Listening is truly a skill set that can be learned and mastered. It is a skill set that comes naturally but quickly can lose its effectiveness.***

Let me explain.

When you watch a newborn closely you see the epitome of one who is taking it all in. A newborn watches everything, they listen to everything, and they are a sponge! As this newborn ages by the weeks and months,

you realize that they are learning an incredible amount of information and experiences. They are able to take what they are learning and communicate with their mom and dad. They are quickly learning the skill set of communication. By the time they are 2 years old, you can teach them just about anything. When my daughter turned 2, I started to teach her the names of the State capitols. I took her to breakfast with me and a friend and during breakfast we listened to Sara rattle of almost 30 State capitols that she recently learned. Our waitress was so amazed that she embarrassingly admitted that she didn't even know 3 of them. The point of the story is 2 fold. First, my daughter Sara was able to learn this skill from her concentrated listening skill.

> ***The second point is at some point we lose that concentrated listening skill. Here is the good news; we can always get that skill set back with practice.***

The reason I say that listening is the cornerstone of effective communication is that through intense listening you can discover just about anything you are searching for. It doesn't matter if it's a better relationship with your spouse or your children, a family member or a friend, or a business acquaintance or a customer. Through intense listening, they all will tell you what they want and how you can satisfy their needs.

Let's take a customer for example. Through asking a series of probing questions you can learn a tremendous amount, by intense listening to what your customer is saying to you. Listening in a nonjudgmental way, with *their* interest in mind, they will tell you how to sell them. Be prepared that one of the ways could be, what you have is not a good fit for them.

On the other hand as they talk and you get to know what they are looking for and what motivates them you may be surprised that your original impression may be leading you down the wrong path and what you are hearing is opening an altogether new door that you can walk through to solve their needs and wants in a different way that you can still fulfill.

Skillful intense listening honors the person you are with. It says to them, who you are and what you are saying is important to me.

With daily practice with your family, friends and business acquaintances, this can be *your* cornerstone to effective communication.

Aim high!

George Madiou

Publisher and Co-founder
www.TheNetworkMarketingMagazine.com

George Madiou is a full-blooded Entrepreneur, complete with validating credentials, Degrees in Marketing and Management from SUNY and NYU (could ya guess he's a native New Yorker!) To date George has owned over 30 businesses, and says they varied from wildly successful to outrageous learning experiences. Among other successful ventures George has achieved high pin levels in two different network marketing companies.

George loves the thrill of teaming up with great people and seeing projects come to life and that passion is responsible for this magazine getting off the ground. George partnered with his good friend John Milton Fogg and here we all (and we includes you the reader) are, making history happen.

George lives in a small town named Boca Raton, Florida. He says "If this isn't Heaven, I know that God at least vacations here." Without question, the joy of his life is his family. He and Debbie are celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. They have two great young adult children, Sara and David.