

S P E A K - U P !

1. **KNOW YOUR STYLE** Are you most comfortable talking to someone face to face or over the phone? Are you at your best in verbal communication or do you express yourself more clearly in writing? Knowing your **PREFERRED COMMUNICATION STYLE** is the first step for successful communication.
2. **PREPARE** Much communication is doomed from the start because one party is distracted, busy or preoccupied with other concerns. **BE CERTAIN THE OTHER PERSON IS AVAILABLE TO LISTEN** before you begin talking: "Do you have time to talk to me?"
3. **DEFINE** **DEFINE THE ISSUE** you want to discuss and stick to it: "I want to talk to you about your mother coming to visit this summer." Don't let yourself be drawn into other areas, like what happened the last time she came to visit, or **YOUR** mother's quirks and peculiarities.
4. **SAY WHAT YOU WANT** **STATE YOUR INTENTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS** clearly and directly: "I'm not opposed to your mother coming to visit; I just want to make sure this visit is more pleasant than the last one."
5. **LISTEN** **BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER** by maintaining eye contact and by reflecting back to the speaker what has been said: "Sounds like you're saying you would feel guilty if we asked her to shorten her stay."
6. **ACKNOWLEDGE** **ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER PERSON'S CONTRIBUTIONS** to the discussion: "I see your point." Remember: acknowledgment is not agreement.
7. **CLARIFY** **DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING.** Clarify anything you are not absolutely sure you understand by asking: "Do you mean...?" or, "Are you saying...?"
8. **NEGOTIATE** **SAY WHAT YOU ARE WILLING TO DO** and what compromises you are willing to make: "I'm willing to have her visit for a week or 10 days if we can have a vacation alone later." Do not agree to anything you will later resent.
9. **SUMMARIZE** For further clarity, **BRIEFLY** summarize the main points of your discussion: "Then we're agreed that she'll come for 10 days in June and in July the two of us will go to the lake for a week."
10. **PRAISE** **EXPRESS YOUR APPRECIATION** for the other person's participation in the communication process: "Thanks for taking time to talk to me." or, "I appreciate your being so understanding."

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**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**