

Roadblocks to Effective Communication

Roadblock	Definition	Example (s)	Situation	Adult Response
VERBAL:				
JUDGING the other person				
1. Judging	Making a judgment	1) You should/ought to . . . and 2) I know it's because...	Mom, I think my grades are dropping in chemistry this quarter.	Probably because you've been lazy about your homework. You should go talk with your teacher right away about extra credit.
2. Name-calling, ridiculing	Calling negative names or words that are negative	Only a dummy would do it that way.	Your child is upset or crying because a friend hurt his/her feelings.	Don't be a baby about it. You've got to grow up and get a thicker skin.
3. Interpreting, diagnosing	Analyzing why a person is behaving as he/she is; playing amateur psychiatrist.	You're just jealous of...	Mom, I'm so overwhelmed and busy and stressed all the time... I'm not sure what to do.	Well, you're such a perfectionist, and you're too hard on yourself. Plus, you say yes to too many things.
4. Praising, agreeing	Giving a compliment that confirms what the speaker is saying.	Well, I think you're a good player.	Dad, I'm not sure if I should stay on the swim team. My times are behind everyone else.	Don't be silly. I think you're a great swimmer
SENDING SOLUTIONS - often compounds a problem or creates new ones without resolving the original dilemma.				
5. Ordering, directing, commanding	Giving solutions with no choices	You must do this now.	Mom, I'm not sure what to do about my class schedule this year. It's really tough, and then I've got sports, too.	You should take every math and science course offered. We want you to be well prepared for college.
6. Warning, admonishing, threatening	Using threats or bribes to try to make someone do something	1) If you don't do what I want . . . and 2) If you do what I want, I do this for you.	Dad, I'm excited about going to this party tonight, but I'm a little worried there will be drinking going on.	You better not get involved with that! If I find out that you were drinking, you'll be grounded for a month!
7. Exhorting, moralizing, preaching	Telling another person what he/she should do.	That is the way to do things.	Your child decides to do an activity without one of his/her friends, and lies to the friend about it.	This is what happens when you're not honest. Haven't I taught you not to lie to people? Think of how your friend will feel.
8. Excessive/inappropriate questioning	Closed-ended questions (can be answered in a few words, ex. "yes" or "no.")	Why do you suppose you hate school?	Mom, I'm worried about my friend. She's been really depressed lately.	Who is it? What's wrong with her? Is it her family or school? Have you told anyone at school?

AVOIDING THE OTHER'S CONCERNS – getting conversation off-track.

9. Advising or giving solutions	Giving the other person a solution to his/her problems.	Go make friends with someone else.	My English teacher hates me! How am I going to pass this class?	That's an easy one to solve. First I would . . .
10. Diverting, distracting, transferring, sarcasm	Pushing the other's problems aside. Not listening and jumping in with one's own problems	Let me tell you what happened to me.	Dad, I can't stand my boss at work. I ask off for certain days and then she schedules me anyway!	You think you've got trouble with a boss! Let me tell you about mine...
11. Lecturing, teaching, giving logical arguments	Attempting to convince the other with an appeal to facts/ logic, without consideration of the emotional factors involved.	Let's look at the facts . . . “	Mom, I don't know what to do. My two friends aren't talking to each other.	Well, think about it logically. It's not your problem or argument, so I just don't think you should get involved. One of them did something wrong, and this is just the consequence.
12. Reassuring, sympathizing	Trying to stop the other person from feeling the negative emotions he/she is experiencing,	Don't worry, things will work out fine.	You find your child crying in his/her room because his/her good friend is moving out of state.	When one door is closed, another one is opened. You'll make new friends.

NONVERBAL:

13. Acting	Using body language that sends negative messages or that rebuffs; being physically abusive	1) Crossing arms, 2) Not looking at speaker, 3) Walking away, 4) Tapping feet, 5) Shaking finger in face, 6) Hitting, and 7) Kicking	Your child comes home from school, slams the door shut, drops his/her clothes on the floor, kicks the cabinet, and turns on the TV.	You frown, cross your arms, tap your foot, and stand in front of your child.
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Additional Roadblocks

Telling other people they are sending roadblocks: When people are introduced to the roadblocks, a fairly typical reaction is, “That's just what my husband (boyfriend, girlfriend, mother, etc.) has been doing all these years. Wait till I tell him (her) about all the roadblocks he/she sends.” Or, “Gosh, my boss uses just about all these barriers. The next time he/she does it, I'm going to point out how he/she is roadblocking me.” This type of roadblock actually belongs in the judgment category.

**Find more helpful hints on effective communication on our web site:
Go to www.dobyouth.org – under CLI – click “For Parents”**