



GWISE Presentation: Better Communication, Better Relationships, Better Lives

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October 22, 2013

Axioms of Interpersonal Communications

- One Cannot Not Communicate
 - Intentionality matters as a sender, but it may not as a receiver
 - A friend sends a text – you don't respond because: (a) your phone is in a dead service zone (b) you are mad at your friend
 - How does a friend make that judgment?
- One cannot un-communicate
 - Once you put it out there, it is out there
 - We can try to shift how it is understood



Axioms of Interpersonal Communications

- Communication = content + relationship
 - Content – report part of message; what is said verbally
 - Relationship – command part of message; how it is said nonverbally
 - “The garbage is getting full.”
 - “You are not the boss of me!”

- Watzlawick calls relation aspect of interaction *metacommunication*
 - Relationship messages are most important element in any communication
 - Relationship messages are an “offer” of how we see ourselves, the other, and our relationship

Axioms of Interpersonal Communications

- The nature of a relationship depends on how both parties punctuate the communication sequence
 - **Punctuate** – interpreting ongoing sequence of events by labeling one event the cause and following event as the response
 - He comes home from work and gets a beer
 - She complains
 - He drinks more and she complains more
 - Cops show up and ask “Who started it?”
 - The answer depends upon the punctuation of events

Axioms of Interpersonal Communications

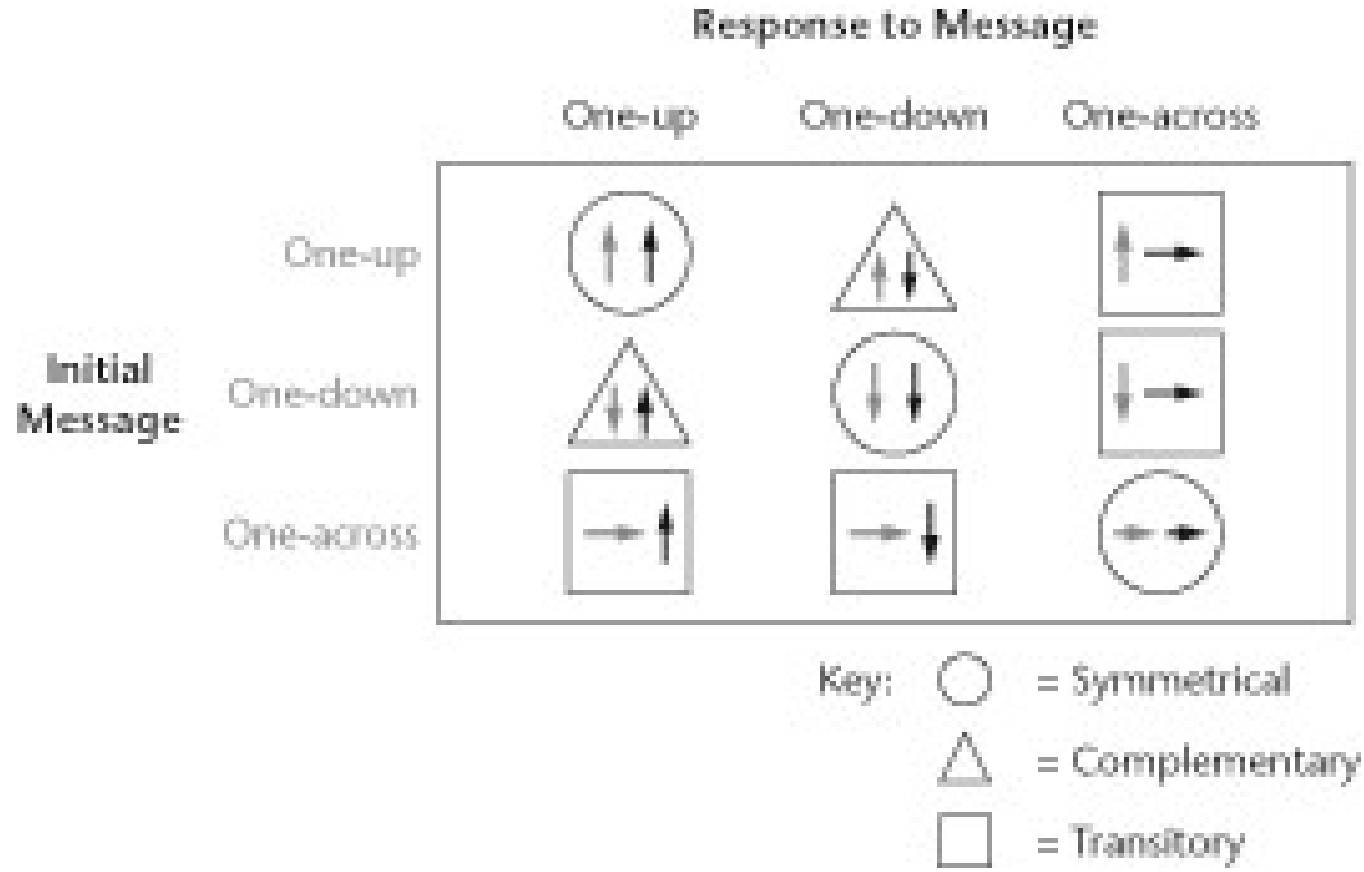
- **One-up communication** – conversational move to gain control of the exchange
 - Asserts dominance, power, control, authority, correctness
- **One-down communication** – conversational move to yield control of the exchange
 - Asserts submission, lack of control, humility, incorrectness
- **One-across communication** – conversation move to neutralize level of control within the exchange
 - Asserts equality, Equality, EQUALITY!

Axioms of Interpersonal Communications

- All communication is either symmetrical, complementary, or transitory
 - **Symmetrical interchange** – interaction based on equal power
 - **Complementary interchange** – interaction based on accepted differences of power
 - **Transitory interchange** – interaction where the power relationship is shifting



Figure 13-2: Matrix of Transactional Types





Tips for a Better Career



- Understand the nonverbal components of messages
- Understand the power identities and demands of your workplace
- Think about how you say, what you say (write, type, record, communicate), and how it is heard/received
- Realize that people often have conflict on two different levels, and sometimes across multiple relationships
 - (Content and relational conflict) (Boss, colleague, Cardinals fan, neighbor)



Tips for Better Relationships



- Understand the nonverbal components of messages
 - “Don’t make that face!”
 - “Don’t tone me!”
- Understand the power identities and demands of your partner, and yourself
 - Try to work together to reach this understanding and to provide for each other
- Think about how you say, what you say (write, type, record, communicate), and how it is heard/received
 - Listen for what the other means, not just what they say/said

+ Tips for a Better Life

- Understand the nonverbal components of messages
 - Are people asking for a favor, demanding help, desperate, aggressive, etc.?
- Send your message to the right person
 - Don't assault someone who will listen to you, instead of the person who needs to do something about your concerns.
 - Say things that help people understand your message – tell them how you are intending it, honestly
- Understand the power identities and demands of the people with whom you interact
 - Some folks need public honor, don't challenge them publicly if another alternative exists.
 - Think about how you say, what you say (write, type, record, communicate), and how it is heard/received
 - Listen for what the other means, not just what they say/said



+ More, if you want it!



The Workplace as a System



- Systems approach to workplace relations defies simplistic explanations of why people act as they do
 - Relationships are complex functions like mathematical functions with variables
 - Each group plays a one-of-a-kind game with homemade rules
 - Games – sequences of behavior governed by rules

The Workplace as a System

- Workplace system – self-regulating, interdependent network of feedback loops guided by members' rules
 - To understand the movement of any single figure in the system, one has to examine the communication patterns among all its members



Systems Theory Concepts



1. Interdependence – what effects one part effects the whole system
2. Homeostasis
 - Family homeostasis – tacit collusion of family members to maintain the status quo
3. Non–summativity (wholeness)
 - Gestalt – a comprehensive experience of connected phenomena
4. Equifinality
5. Openness

Trapped in a System with No Place to Go

- Systems are highly resistant to change
 - **Enabler** – within addiction culture, person whose nonassertive behavior allows others to continue in their substance abuse
 - System members often caught in **double bind** – person trapped under mutually exclusive expectations

Reframing: Changing the Game by Changing the Rules

- **Reframing** – process of instituting change by stepping outside of a situation and reinterpreting what it means
 - **Whole-message model** – regards verbal and nonverbal components of a message as completely integrated and often interchangeable

