

Article: How to say what you mean and mean what you say - Communicate with Authenticity and Conviction

For several years I have been delivering management training programmes to Emirati nationals in Abu Dhabi.

At the start of the course I share with the group my qualifications and experience, so they know more about me and my training expertise. As a Western female subject expert I am not what the group expect or are used to so I establish my credentials.

A day or so into the programme and the group feels more comfortable with me, and able to ask personal questions. Invariably someone will ask me 'Are you married?' 'Yes' I respond. The next question is usually 'Do you have children?'

When this question is asked I am tempted to lie and say 'Yes' as I know from experience that if I say 'No' the next question will be 'Why not?' Not having children is extremely unusual in the Emirati culture and this will be a further difference between me and the group.

Yet I always say 'No'. I know that if I lie I will communicate that I am lying, and I am less likely to be trusted. I also know that by telling the truth and acknowledging who I am, I am being authentic.

What is authenticity and why does it matter?

The definition of authentic is *'The quality or condition of being authentic, trustworthy or genuine'* Authenticity matters because it impacts on the level of trust that people have with other people.

If someone believes another person is inauthentic, not genuine, they are usually less likely to believe what that other person says. This will impact on the relationship they have with that person and the degree to which they can influence them. Being perceived as authentic will assist in building trust and in influencing others.

"Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing. Now go out there and be authentic. Albert Schweitzer

In addition to being authentic, to influence you need to communicate conviction. Conviction is *'a firmly held belief or opinion. "If you believe, they'll believe" says Deborah Meadon, Dragons Den*

How to communicate with Authenticity and Conviction - Communicate Congruence

Congruence is *'the quality or state of corresponding, agreeing, of being congruent'*. Congruence is the **alignment** of the communication channels being used

Face to face, people communicate in three channels:-

- The words said
- Voice tone
- Non-verbal communication – body language

On the telephone, people communicate in two channels:-

- The words said
- Voice tone

People distrust incongruence, that is, when the different communication channels do not match.

If someone stands in front of you and says 'I'm really confident', in a mumbling, hesitant tone, with averted eyes, cowed shoulders, head down, you are extremely unlikely to believe them.

Firstly because the words said have much less impact (7%) on the overall message than voice tone and non-verbal communication. *Secondly because* there is a mismatch – incongruence – between the messages from the three communication channels. On the telephone the words account for 18% of the impact and the voice tone 82%, so if someone says 'I really want to help you' in a monotone, you are more likely to believe the tone, not the words.

How to Communicate Congruently - by Alignment of the Neurological Levels

In every person there are different levels of functioning:-

- **Purpose**
- **Identity**
- **Beliefs and Values**
- **Capabilities**
- **Behaviours**
- **Environment**

For complete personal congruence each level needs to be aligned with each other.

Application of the Model - How to achieve congruence through neurological level alignment ¹

1. First select a role that applies to you, for example, leader, HR professional, support worker
2. Complete the gaps. You can use this for any role you have

As a _____

Environment

- As an authentic _____ what environment am I in?

Behaviours

- What behaviours are required for me to be an authentic _____?
- As an authentic _____ what specific things am I doing or saying?

Capabilities

- As an authentic _____ what skills am I using to enable me to do what I do?

Beliefs and Values

- As an authentic _____ what values are important to me?
- What do I believe to be true?
- Are there any beliefs that I know would assist me?

Identity

- As an authentic _____ who am I?
- What metaphor or symbol represents who I am as an authentic _____?

¹ Neurological Level Alignment is a model created by Robert Dilts



About the Author - Krista Powell Edwards

Krista is a very experienced and highly qualified consultant, coach, facilitator, trainer and author.

She uses her experience and expertise to support individuals and organisations to enhance their effectiveness and performance.

Krista is currently writing her first book on how to effectively communicate credibility.

Expertise and experience

Krista has developed her expertise through

- An extensive track record of supporting organisations in the UK and internationally since 1995.
- Masters level research in the factors that affect the achievement of workplace performance.
- Extensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD), (including regular attendance at conferences and development programmes).
- Research of 'best practice' consultancy, facilitation and learning and development
- Qualifying as a Master Trainer, Master Practitioner and Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).
- Designing and delivering 500+ training and development programmes.
- 20+ years as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) volunteer - branch chair, council representative - supporting the CPD and performance of 7500+ HR professionals.
- Lecturing at a university (International Human Resource Management).

Specialist areas

Krista specialises in three main areas:-

Credibility - How to communicate credibility for influence and positive impact in the workplace

Credible HR - Enabling HR to add value to the organisation

Personal Effectiveness Skills - Support in developing confidence, credibility, influence, time management and assertiveness and conflict management skills so that individuals and teams are able to perform effectively.

Services

Krista offers support in **workplace performance improvement**.

Tailored, cost effective

- Consultancy and Research
- Coaching
- Facilitation
- Training and Development

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