

CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION

STEP 1

“I” STATEMENT TO AWAKEN AWARENESS AND CREATIVE FORCE.

The first step in conscious communication is becoming aware of your experience. The clearer you are about your own thoughts feelings and actions, the easier it is to express them to another person. As multi-dimensional beings there is potential to experience life through different layers. You may notice thoughts and emotions, physical sensations, intuitions, and moments of interconnection. Without judging this inner experience as good or bad, right or wrong, make time to explore these different dimensions of your experience and see what is there.

Once you are aware of your experience communicate using “I” statements. Speaking from personal experience is self empowering because you take responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and actions. By using “I” statements you also avoid making assumptions about others that may or may not be true. Rather than saying “doing homework will reinforce today’s learning” try saying “I believe doing your homework will reinforce today’s learning”. Notice if you feel a difference when you use “I” statements instead of generalizations.

Getting lost in togetherness.

Using we rather than I can replace responsibility and project your own power of creativity on someone or something other than yourself.

“We should fix dinner” versus “I feel hungry and I want us to fix dinner”

“It is upsetting talking to you” versus “I feel upset talking to you”

“People feel nervous in new situations” versus “I feel nervous in new situations”

Externalizing Your feelings

We often use “the, this, you, your and that” when we really mean “my, mine or I.”

They can be statements we used to avoid our feelings.

“This is a stupid situation” versus “I feel stupid.”

“Did you like the way that was done?” versus “Did you like what I did? Do you like me for it?”

Questions can be I statements in disguise

“Why did you wear those boots?” versus “I don't like those boots.”

“When did you get home?” versus “It was late and I feel hurt that you didn't call me when you got home.”

Qualifiers always of watering down the truth and qualifying our experience.

They include: “I guess, I suppose, perhaps, may be, kind of, probably, only, just and sort of.”

“I guess what I'm feeling is kind of hurt” versus “I feel hurt.”

“I suppose you'd say I'm sort of angry” versus “I'm angry.”

Nullifies are ways of avoiding or escaping what is.

They diminish self-responsibility. Examples include:

“I should” when we mean “I could” or “but” instead of “and.”

“I should eat more moderately” versus “I could eat more moderately.”

“I have to do this because ...” versus “I choose to do this because ...”

STEP 2

CO-LISTENING

During this process the listener puts full attention on the speaker and practices non-judgmental awareness without replying in anyway. It's natural for the listener to be aware of how the sensory information or Internal commentary, and that is not bad or wrong. But when the listener notices their attention is moving in another direction they simply guide it back to their partners voice. The speaker's role is to simply verbalize what they are aware of without planning or needing to censor what they say. The speaker notices what it's like to express their feelings thoughts and emotions without being judged analyzed or fixed. The listener notices what it is like to listen without commenting, affirming or fixing.

STEP 3

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Reflective listening is similar to co-listening as it begins with one partner speaking and the other partner listening. For this practice, once the speaker is finished sharing, the listener reflects what they heard. Their partner say, without interpreting or analyzing. If the speaker feels like anything they expressed was misheard or not acknowledged, they have an opportunity to clarify. .

STEP 4

EMPOWERING FEEDBACK

The next step of conscious communication is empowering feedback. When you engage with others as in posture clinics or practice teaching, there is the potential to learn and develop valuable skills. You can see and reflect to your peers what might not be apparent for them and vice versa. As a yoga teacher it is important to be skillful in offering and receiving feedback so you are self -empowered and empower others, and continue to learn and grow creatively. To ensure what you are offering has the best chance of being prepared, considered and integrated there are a few elements that are important.

Intention of Learning and Support

When you offer feedback keep in mind that the intention is to learn about your own unique needs and communicate them to the other person in a way that they can understand and integrate. Feedback is not meant to criticize or make anyone wrong. It is meant to inform. Each person receiving the feedback has a free choice to make an adjustment or not. When you speak with an intention of cooperation and learning feedback becomes empowering rather than judgmental.

Speak from personal experience “I” statements

It is important to understand that different people experience things in a unique way. When offering and receiving feedback try not to assume that others have had the same

experience as you. When each person takes responsibility for his or her experience particular needs, preferences and information generally lands easier. Speak about your own thoughts feelings and actions using “I” statements. Inform the other person of what your experience was, and what you appreciated or needed different from them. By communicating in this way you are helping them learn about your experience and supporting their ability to empower a wide range of individuals.

Use simple and observable examples

To keep the feedback process simple and clear use observable examples that you can speak about directly. Feedback may be an affirmation or appreciation or something that you needed differently from the teacher. The more specific your example is the easier it is to understand. When offering feedback reflect a simple example of something the person said or did, what your experience was, and if needed, an action they could've done to support you. This will help you integrate your own experience and give the listener concrete information to empower their teaching.

Three steps to offer empowering feedback

When you (observable behavior)...

I experienced (feeling, thought, emotion, intuitions etc.) ...

I appreciated / needed...

Example of offering an appreciation

“When you asked me a question, started the sentence with “excuse me.”

I felt delighted.

I appreciated how polite your request was.”

Example of offering a potential improvement point

“When you called out the answer

I could not hear Susan finishing her answer.

What I needed was for you to wait until she had finished and me to ask for another answer.”