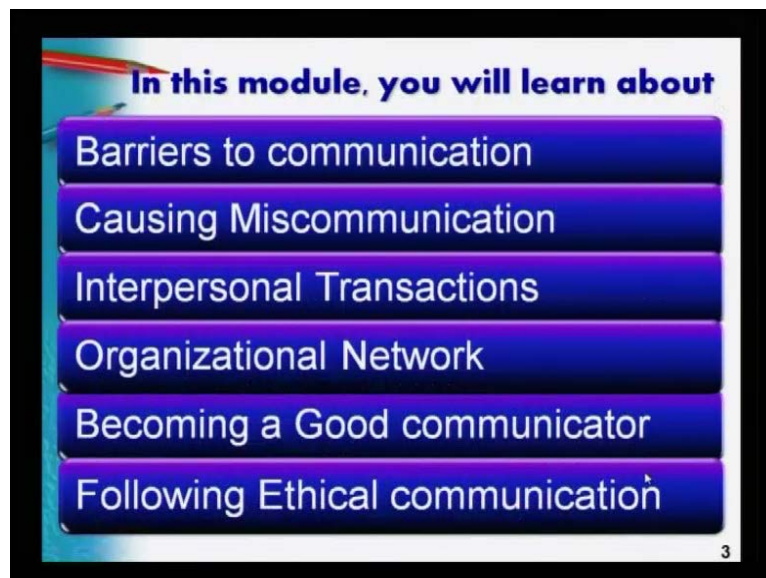


Communication Skills
Prof. T. Ravichandran
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Lecture - 4

Hello, welcome to NPTEL course on communication skills. We are on the second module and this is the third lecture of second module, Barriers to communication and this is the third part of the lecture on Barriers to communication. Just to recollect very quickly, in the first lecture, we actually talked about the various barriers to communication. In the second one, we were talking about the various overcoming strategies. In this one, once again I am going to talk about barriers in terms of causing miscommunication. What is miscommunication? How is this been caused and how can we avoid minimize causing this kind of miscommunication.

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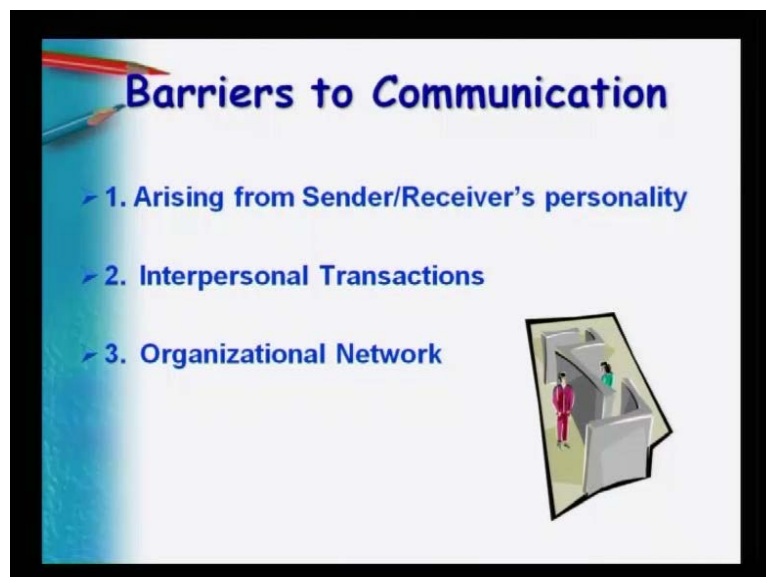
Miscommunication can happen for its various reasons. So, we will just look at them. Overall very quickly we started with barriers to communication and then in this we will talk about the barriers, which actually cause miscommunication, in terms of interpersonal transactions and organizational network, and I will also give some tips of becoming a good communicator towards the end. Overall, my emphasis is going to be on making you an ethical communicator also.

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Now, once again if you recollect, barriers are things, which are obstacles to effective communication and we discussed that, anything that impedes the free flow of your ideas from reaching the other person, that is the receiver, that is a barrier. Something that prevents active listening and careful response is a barrier. These barriers act as physical, mental, emotional, psychological blocks and actually cause this miscommunication.

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We discussed again that these barriers are happening at three categorical levels. One is the sender receiver's personality. The other is, usually when the transaction is taking

place between two people or more than two and then generally it is revolved in organizational network.

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Barriers

- **External**—noise, climate, environment
These barriers are mostly outside in the environment and can be easily overcome.
- **Internal**—illness (physical & mental), anger, prejudice/bias, mental detouring, day-dreaming, distraction, fear, lack of confidence
These are obstacles that are there within us. These may be a little difficult to get rid of but it is not impossible to do so.

Now, barriers, again you can classify them into two types, the external and the internal. The external happen to be the physical one, such as the noise, the climate and the barriers, which comes or arise out of environmental problems or environmental situations. Now, these barriers are mostly outside in the environmental and can be easily overcome. For example, while making a phone call in an airport, the flight takes off. So, the external din, the continuous noise by the flight affected your hearing and you are not able to hear what the other person was telling. So, you can pause or you can make another call or you can ask the person to repeat the number. So, this external barrier of noise can be averted, if you are willing to repeat and seek clarification. Same thing in terms of climate, for example.

So, suppose you feel very chill, very shivering and while talking, so in your mind it is affecting you, “oh, it is so chill” or conversely, you are sweating and then you feel that, you are just feeling tired because you are sweating so much and you need some fresh air. So, you can just pause for a minute and tell the person to switch on the fans or switch on the ac, ok. When you just cool the environment, you call also, like if you are feeling very cold, you can ask somebody to give some kind of shawl to warm yourself up. So, what I am trying to tell you is that, you always minimize or overcome the barriers that is

coming to you from the environment externally, such as noise or the climate. So, environment in the sense like, suddenly people walking out and your students are getting distracted. So, you can just tell them to shut the door and close the window for some time. Some kind of door repair work is going on in the next door. Somebody is hammering and you are giving a very important lecture. So, you can go and request the other person to stop for a while. So, all this external ones can be managed, minimized and controlled.

But, the internal one, sometimes becomes chronic. It is very difficult to control and overcome unless one pays constant attention to overcoming that; illness for example, physical as well as mental. Sometimes, you know that both are correlated. Psycho-semantic sickness for example, is a kind of sickness that is conceived mentally and then that is revealed through the skin or somebody parts. Because, mentally it was conceived that the person has this sickness even before the sickness actually came to the person. So, illness, both physical and mental, anger, prejudice, bias, mental detouring, that is mind gets distracted while talking, day dreaming, distraction, fear, lack of confidence, and nervousness. Now, all these ones are internal. So, these are obstacles that are there within us and this may be a little difficult to overcome these ones. But it is not impossible to do so.

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2. Barriers to Interpersonal Transactions

Understanding is shaped by

- Communication climate
- Context and setting
- Background, experiences
- Knowledge, mood
- Values, beliefs, culture

"Culture is communication and Communication is culture."— Edward Hall

So, let us look at some strategies also. Before we go to that, understand why some of these inner most thinking are not that easy to overcome. The reason is this. Because, they are acting as barriers in interpersonal transactions and they are deeply embedded to us and culturally given to us. Look at this. Understanding itself it shaped by communication climate, context and setting, background and experiences, knowledge, mood, values beliefs, and culture. Now, the low lowest one, values, beliefs and culture is very important. As one of the theorist in cultural studies is Edward Hall, he says, “Culture is communication and communication is culture.”

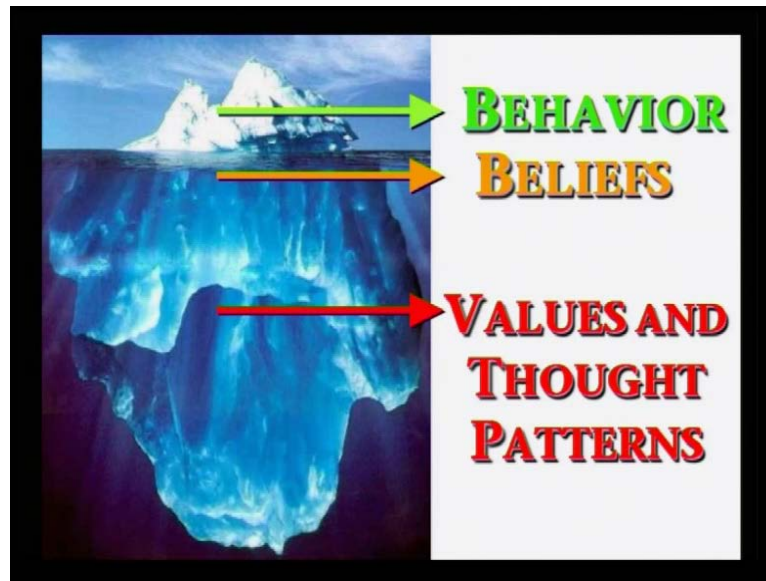
Culture is communication and communication is culture. He is just treating them synonymsly which each other, which means when you speak, you are speaking your culture. You cannot hide it and the way you speak is actually determined and governed by your culture. It is mutually dependent.

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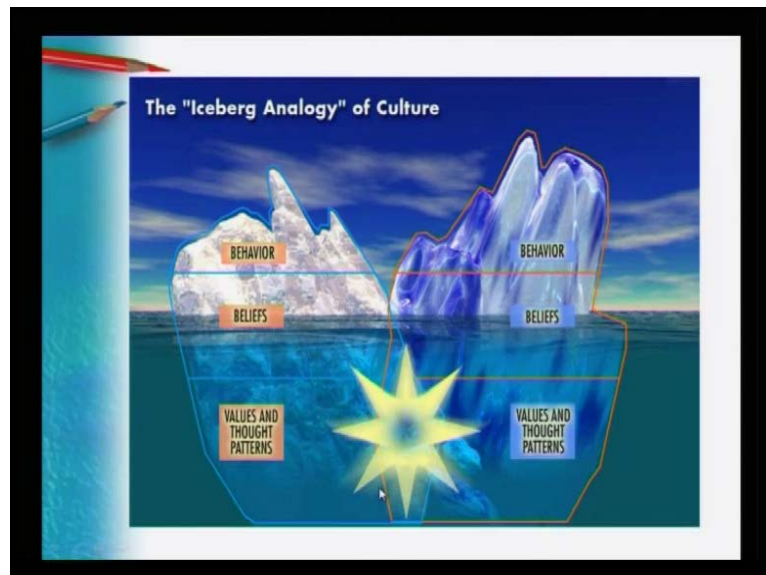
Culture itself is like an iceberg. Now, why it is like an iceberg? Because, sixth-seventh of the iceberg is under the water. Now, only the top most spot is revealed to you in the form of behavior.

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This is called as this famous cultural theory in terms of iceberg. Look at this. The top most one is behavior, the one that is revealed to you and then the next level you have your beliefs. But these are embedded very deep inside you in terms of values and thought patterns. Now, these cannot be shaken so easily. It cannot be changed so easily.

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This is what we call as the iceberg analogy of culture. When two people come together on the left side and on the right side, on the overt side, on the top, you find the behavior and followed by beliefs and at the bottom most, you find their values and thought

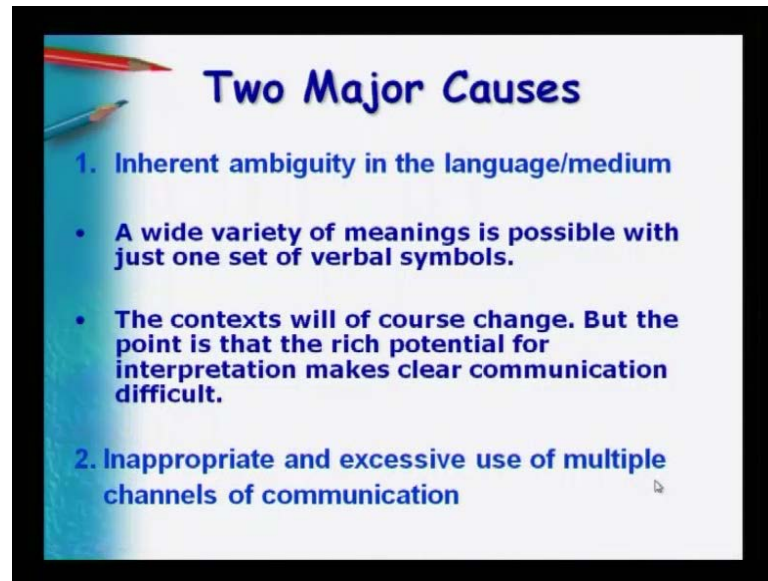
patterns. Now, the clash happens here and the behavior just overtly shows it; superfluously expresses that.

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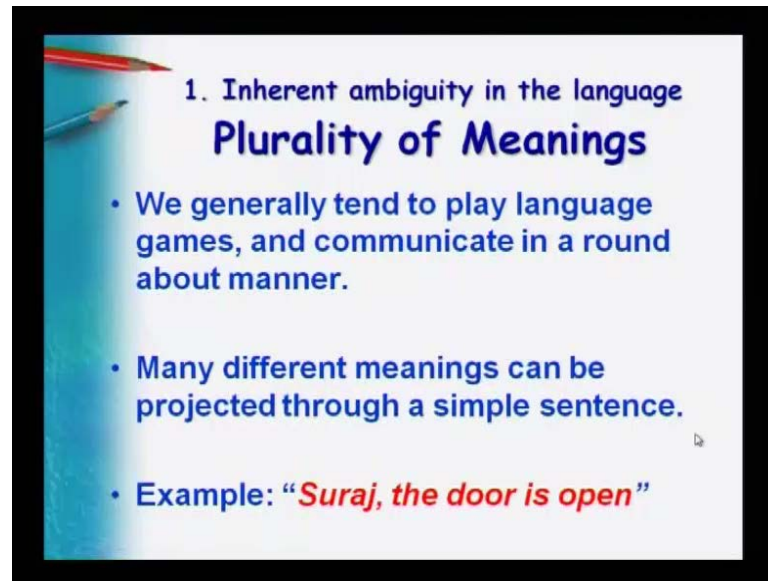
What is miscommunication? Miscommunication, we can say is a worst consequence of ineffective communication. People have not thought of the barriers. People have not thought of overcoming the barriers and that is why miscommunication takes place. Barriers to communication can often cause miscommunication. But what will happen when there is miscommunication? The end result is counterproductive. You wanted to have something. The result that is happening is exactly the opposite. The message gets distorted or totally misinterpreted or misunderstood. So, the communication time is wasted. The business climate is completely damaged. Some good will that was earned over generations, centuries, they get lost.

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Why miscommunication happens? Mostly because of the inherent ambiguity in the language or the medium that we are using for communication. Why because a wide variety of meanings is possible with just one set of verbal symbols. The context will of course change. But the point is that, the rich potential for interpretation makes communication difficult, which means you say one thing and even if you specify the context, it is always possible for the interpreter, the audience or the receiver, to take a totally different meaning which is not desired by you. Also, the inappropriate and excessive use of multiple channels of communication, which I briefly (()) in the previous lecture, so that also causes miscommunication.

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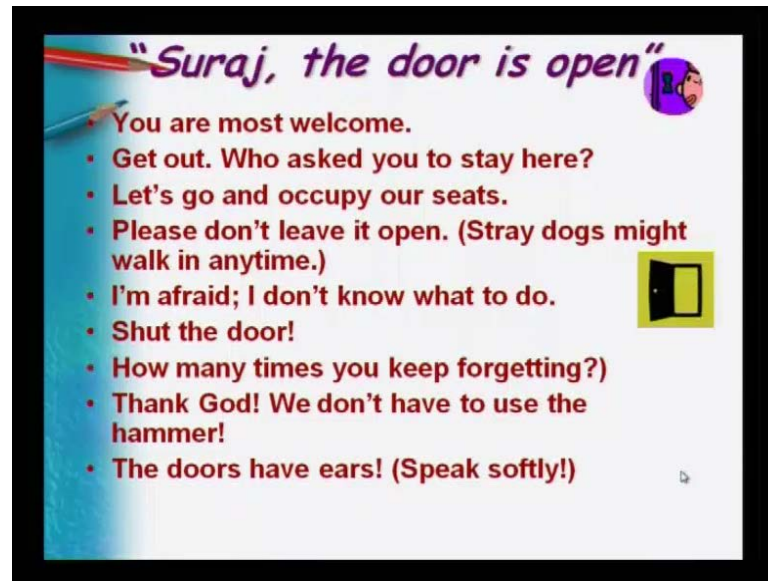
1. Inherent ambiguity in the language

Plurality of Meanings

- We generally tend to play language games, and communicate in a round about manner.
- Many different meanings can be projected through a simple sentence.
- Example: “*Suraj, the door is open*”

Look at the first part. Understand that language is inherently ambiguous or miscommunication is caused because of the inherent ambiguity in the language. Language has plurality of meanings. Language is polysemy's. Language is ambiguous. So, we generally tend to play language games. So, Wittgenstein, a philosopher said that, we actually play linguistic games. The way we play chess, we keep the rules in our mind and then when we move the coin, we anticipate the other persons move. But if you do not know the rules, then you cannot play the game and enjoy it. So, we tend to play this game and communicate in a roundabout manner. Sometimes, you do not do that directly. Many different meanings can be projected through a simple sentence. In the previous lecture, I said, just a word like rich has twelve meanings. Now, let us look at a simple sentence like, “Suraj, the door is open.” Let us see how many meanings are possible out of this.

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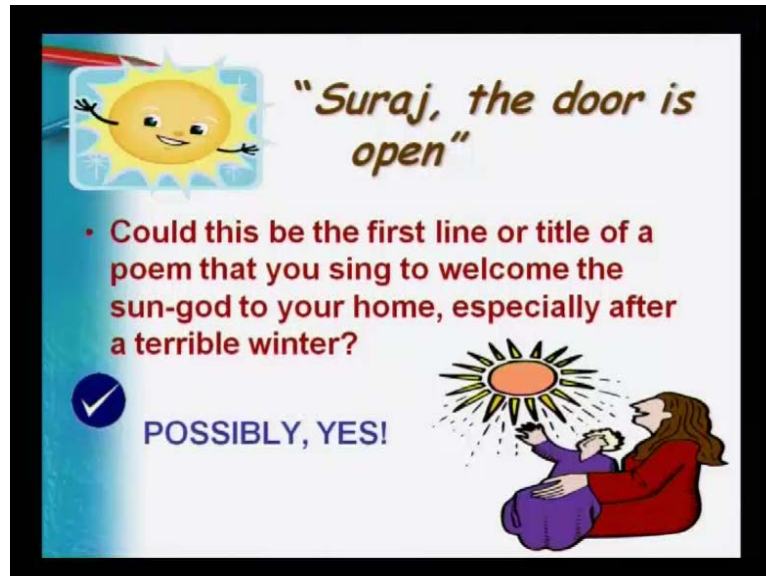


One can infer as many meanings as possible. But at least about ten are easily detectable. So, when you say, "Suraj, the door is open", one meaning is, you are most welcome and please come in, in that sense. "Suraj, the door is open", implying get out. I do not want to you to be here. Who asked to stay here? Again, "Suraj, the door is open", let us go and occupy the seats. So, you are going to an auditorium or a theater and then one of the friend says that it is open and let us go in or get in. Please do not leave it open. So, implying that, "Suraj, the door is open. Don't you know that you should not leave it open like this. Dogs will get in." Then another situation, Suraj happens to be the boss and the subordinate goes and then finds that some thief or somebody has broken the door open. So, he calls him and says, "Suraj, the door is open." Saying that, "I am afraid. I do not know what to do. Tell me should I call the police?"

Now, another simple incident, "Suraj, the door is open. Why don't you shut it? Don't you see that?" Then as a warning, may be the person keeps forgetting it and you are asking, "How many times you keep forgetting? Would not you close it?" Another situation, let us assume that there are two people who come to steal something from the home and then when they come and then they thought that they have to use hammer and other things to break the lock open. But then the person sees that, it is just open. The inmate actually has forgotten to lock it. So, it is a wonderful stroke of luck. He says, "Suraj, the door is open. So come. I am happy. Thank god we do not have to use the hammer. It is just open for us." Two people are talking and then it is a very political

environment and then one person says, “Keep quite. Suraj, the door is open.” Implying that, even the neighbors, the people standing out will hear us. So, speak in a low tone.

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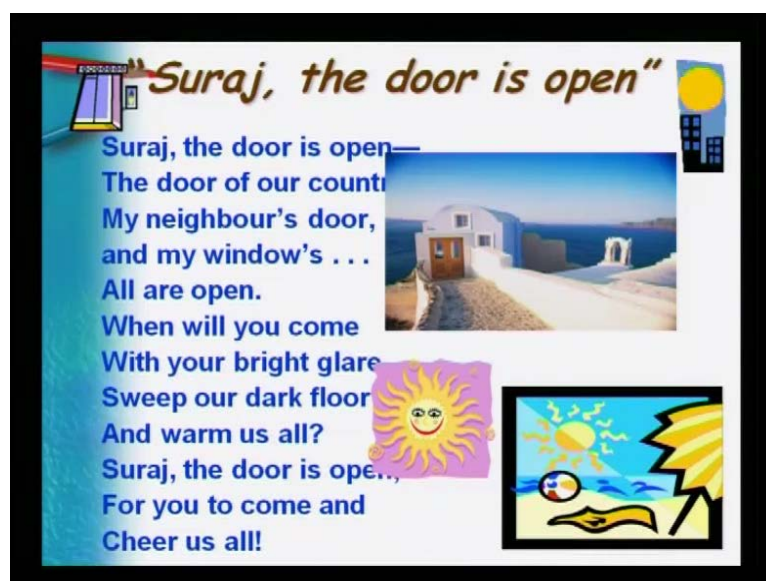
"Suraj, the door is open"

- Could this be the first line or title of a poem that you sing to welcome the sun-god to your home, especially after a terrible winter?

✓ POSSIBLY, YES!

So, just it is a caution. So, it can be used in so many ways. Then can this be the first line or title of a poem that you sing to welcome the sun god? Because, Suraj in Indian context, is actually referring to the sun god. So, when we say, “Suraj, the door is open”, are we inviting the sun god to your home especially after a terrible winter?

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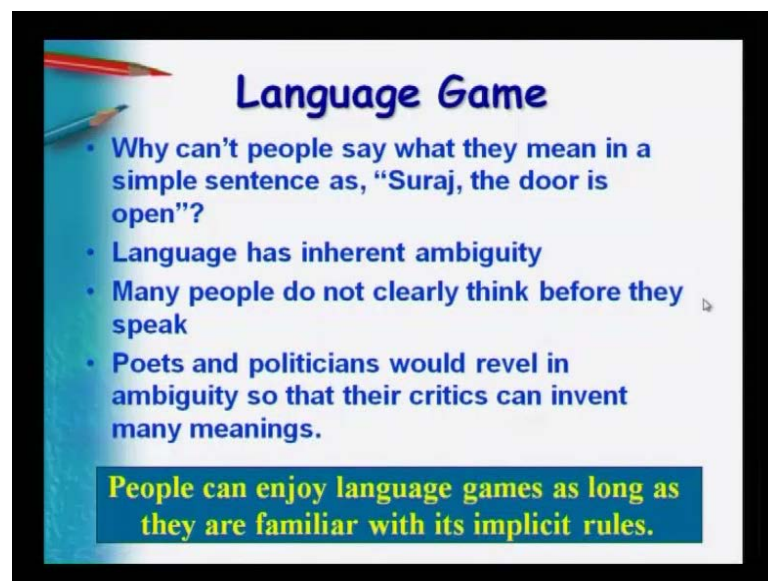


"Suraj, the door is open"

Suraj, the door is open—
The door of our country
My neighbour's door,
and my window's . . .
All are open.
When will you come
With your bright glare
Sweep our dark floors
And warm us all?
Suraj, the door is open,
For you to come and
Cheer us all!

So, possibly yes. Look at this. One can write a poem like this. “Suraj, the door is open. The door of our country, the neighbor’s door and my windows all are open.” So, Suraj, please come. We are welcoming you. “When will you come with your bright glare; sweep our dark floor and warm us all? Suraj, the door is open for you to come and cheer us all” Now, this can also mean that this, the title or pre prelude to a long poem, to an interesting poem, just like welcoming the sun after very long and cold severe winter.

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Language Game

- Why can't people say what they mean in a simple sentence as, "Suraj, the door is open"?
- Language has inherent ambiguity
- Many people do not clearly think before they speak
- Poets and politicians would revel in ambiguity so that their critics can invent many meanings.

People can enjoy language games as long as they are familiar with its implicit rules.

Now, what about this language game? Why cannot people say what they mean in a simple sentence as, “Suraj, the door is open.” When they actually mean that the door is literally open. When it can mean 11 or 12 other things to the audience, why cannot they be so specific? Because, as I said before, language has inherent ambiguity. It reveals in that and it always enjoys leaving the possibility of second and third meaning and many people, to be frank, they are not clearly sure about what they want to convey. They do not think this is what I want to convey. They often speak and then realize that they are not able to convey their ideas correctly. They say sorry. What I mean to say, what I mean to say, No, no, I do not mean that and they try to correct their message.

Then, if you look at poets, politicians, people such as poets and politicians, put revel in ambiguity. They enjoy this, because they think that it serves their critics right and they think that critics can invent many meanings and they can always escape with the meaning that they choose to. So, language has this. It has its merits and demerits. But to

be a professional communicator, to be an effective communicator, you should be aware of this and then limit ambiguity when you are trying to send your message. People can enjoy language games as long as they are familiar with the implicit rules. You should ensure that that they are familiar with the rules. If you do not know or if you are sure that they may not be familiar with, you better clear the rules first before you play the game.

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GLOBAL ASPECTS

- “global village”- growth of MNCs—
Operate in heterogeneous social environment
- Communication is culture specific—
system of symbols, beliefs, etc, differ.
Ignorance leads to *cross-cultural conflicts*
- ❖ American/Chinese on a cemetery
- To avoid—one needs to be open-minded, tolerant,
courteous and keenly perceptive of the non-verbal
symbols.
- Treat a foreigner as he would like to be treated—
e.g. *Chinese-gift of a clock offends*

Now, today miscommunication has to be thought in a global context. Later, we are going to talk about culture and communication. That is, inter cultural communication and how communication is affected by our cultural transactions globally. But just to give a preview kind of thing. Today, in a global pool, so it is said that we are actually living in a kind of global village. This is because of the growth of the MNC’s and people are now acting in a heterogeneous kind of environment. So, different people, different culture different language put as a mixture together and it is a heterogeneous kind of environment.

Now, it was told you that communication is culture specific. It is a system of symbols, beliefs etcetera. But they differ. Ignorance in the difference can often lead to cross cultural conflicts. One interesting example is the one that happened in terms of a conversation between an American and Chinese in a cemetery. So, two culturally different environments. But both the American and Chinese happen to be in the cemetery and then the American had kept some sweet smelling flowers, very beautiful ones, roses

and other flowers and then this side, the Chinese had kept lot of dishes. So, be it this fried rice, chicken variety and then mutton variety and then all kinds of dishes and very delicious and so much of quantity he had kept it on the cemetery. Both were solemnly looking at the person who is buried there and they were making their prayers.

Now, the American takes a side glance and then he is smiling and he could not control the laughter. So, then the Chinese asks him, “Why are you laughing?” So, then the American says, “I am just wondering when your grandfather will come out of that cemetery to eat all the dish that you had to kept for him.” To which, the Chinese retorted very quickly. He said that, “By the time your grandfather would come out and smelt all the flowers, my grandfather would have finished the entire dish.” The point is perspective cultural variance. So, what is appearing to be appropriate and right in one culture, may appear to be ridiculous in another culture. Acceptance of this variation and acknowledging that and making modulations accordingly in communication makes effectiveness and avoids miscommunication.

So, to avoid miscommunication, one needs to be open minded, tolerant, courteous and keenly perspective of the non-verbal symbols. So, the way one shakes hand and the way one shows respect. So, in some culture, receiving something from left hand is acceptable. In some other culture, receiving a gift from left hand is not acceptable. In some, giving in one hand is acceptable and in some, you have to use both hands to accept. So, these variations and even treating a foreigner the way the person wants to be treated. For example, in India, giving a gift of a clock or a wrist watch at the time of a person’s retirement is considered to be beneficial for the person and thinking that the person will remember the one who has gifted it forever.

So, whenever he looks at the clock or the time piece or the wrist watch, so that is considered to be normal, whereas, for the Chinese, gifting of a clock is offense, because they do not consider it as a good omen. They think that it is signifying some bad omen. So, it is better to avoid. So, know what is relevant in your culture may not be the one that is relevant and beneficial for somebody in other culture. Knowing this difference and enhances the communication effectiveness.

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What is Miscommunication?

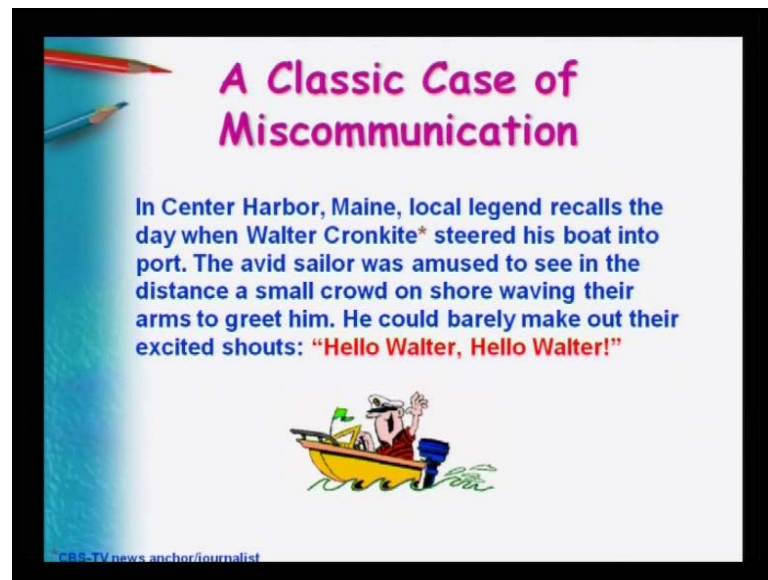
- Communication is **action/transaction**, and thus miscommunication can be viewed as instances of **action/transaction failure** (when the speaker fails to produce the intended effect).
- **Misperception** (when the hearer cannot recognize what the speaker intended to communicate), or both.

J. A. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962)

What is miscommunication? It is been told to you before also. Communication is action transaction. Communication is action transaction and thus, miscommunication can be viewed as instances of action, transaction failure. That is, failure in terms of action and transaction leads to miscommunication.

This means, the speaker fails to produce the intended effect. So, then miscommunication takes place. This can happen because of misperception also. When the hearer cannot recognize what the speaker intended to communicate or both. So misperception. So, both sides there is a kind of misperception.

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When we look at some famous examples, so you will understand this. This is the classic case of miscommunication. Again frequently quoted. So, this is about Walter Cronkite and he is supposed to be a very famous CBS TV news anchor and journalist. What happened to Walter Cronkite? So, let me read out the anecdote and you can follow it. It is an interesting one and you can understand how the miscommunication took place. So, in Central Harbor, Maine, local legend recalls the day when Walter Cronkite steered his boat into port. The avid sailor was amused to see in the distance a small crowd on shore waving their arms to greet him. He could barely make out their excited shouts. "Hello Walter, Hello Walter!" So, he heard their excited shouts as "Hello Walter, Hello Walter!"

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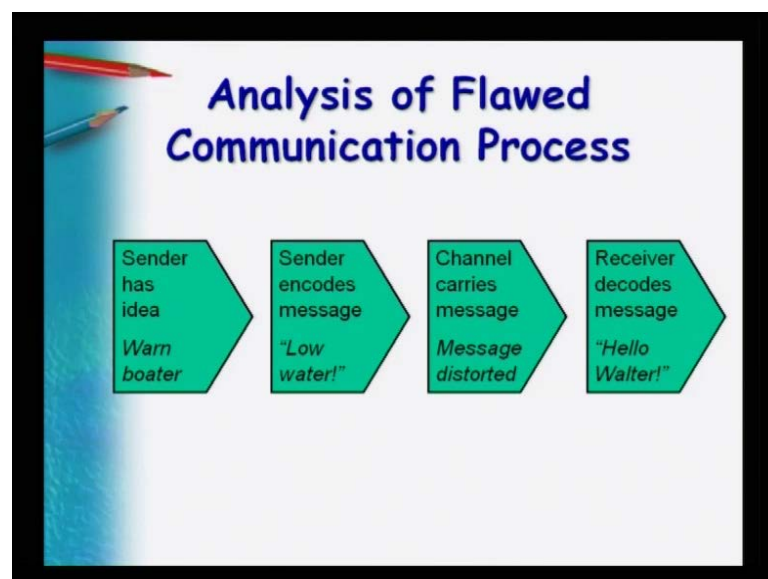
A Classic Case of Miscommunication...

As his boat came closer, the crowd grew larger, still yelling. Pleased at the reception, Cronkite tipped his white captain's hat, waved back, even took a bow. But before reaching dockside, Cronkite's boat abruptly jammed aground. The crowd stood silent. The veteran news anchor suddenly realized what they'd been shouting: **"Low water, low water!"**

The slide features a cartoon illustration of a boatman in a yellow boat with a blue outboard motor, waving to a crowd. The background is a light blue gradient with two pencils (one red, one blue) in the top left corner.

As his boat came closer, the crowd grew larger. So, boat was coming closer, the crowd grew larger, still yelling. Pleased at the reception, so he was so pleased that people are becoming more in number, Cronkite tipped his white captain's hat, waved back, even took a bow. But before reaching dockside, Cronkite's boat abruptly jammed aground. The crowd stood silent. The veteran news anchor suddenly realized what they had been shouting it as "Low water, low water!"

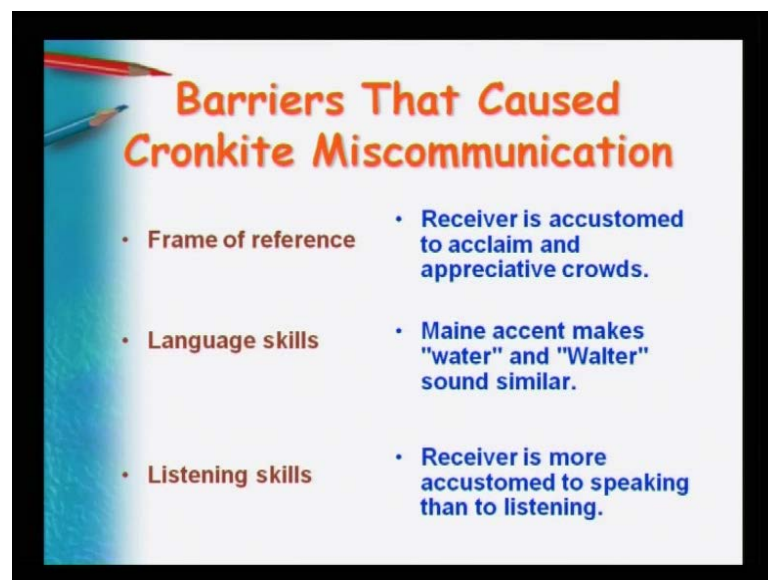
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Now, if you look at the analysis of this miscommunication that has taken place, what was the flaw in this communication process? The sender has an idea, that is the people on the side of the port, so they wanted to warn the boater; they wanted to tell him it is low water and your boat will get struck. The sender encodes the message and says “Low water, low water”

Now, after doing this, the channel carries the message. But the message is distorted because the way it was spoken, the message got distorted and maybe it got distorted because of the noise from the boat or maybe they were all shouting together and they were not speaking clearly. So, the receiver decodes the message as “Hello Walter.” Low water, he decodes that as “Hello Walter.”

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Now, because of this, what has happened is, you will see that in terms of the frame of reference, if you look at it, the receiver is accustomed to acclaim and appreciate the appreciative crowds is generally used. In terms of language skills, Maine accent makes water and Walter sound similar. So, there was no difference when they were shouting. In terms of listening skills, the receiver is more accustomed to speaking than to listening. This was the major flop. So, he was not listening to them actually. He was more responding. He was giving his domineering outlook, waving hands and then at no point, he could suspect that there is something wrong.

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Barriers That Caused Cronkite Miscommunication...

- Emotional interference
- Ego prompted the receiver to believe crowd was responding to his celebrity status.
- Physical barriers
- Noise from boat, distance between senders and receivers.

Which barriers could be overcome through better communication skills?

Now, in terms of emotional interference, what actually acted in between was his ego. Ego prompted the receiver to believe crowd was responding to his celebrity status. He thought that they were waving because of his celebrity status. Physical barriers, probably it was the noise from boat and the distance between senders and receivers. So, it was not heard properly. Now, if you analyze this, which barriers could be overcome through better communication skills?

So, if you look at it, you will not be able to overcome the physical barriers because unless you stop the noise, which also can be done. But generally in the moment, this is something that is inevitable. But the other barriers, if you are able to lower down your ego, if you can be a better listener and from the other side, can they use some kind of non-verbal communication? Can they show a red flag? Can they show a black flag to indicate that there is some danger? Do not come this side. So, both sides, if they try to use another medium, another channel of communication and if this person happens to be a better listener, so this flaw could have been avoided.

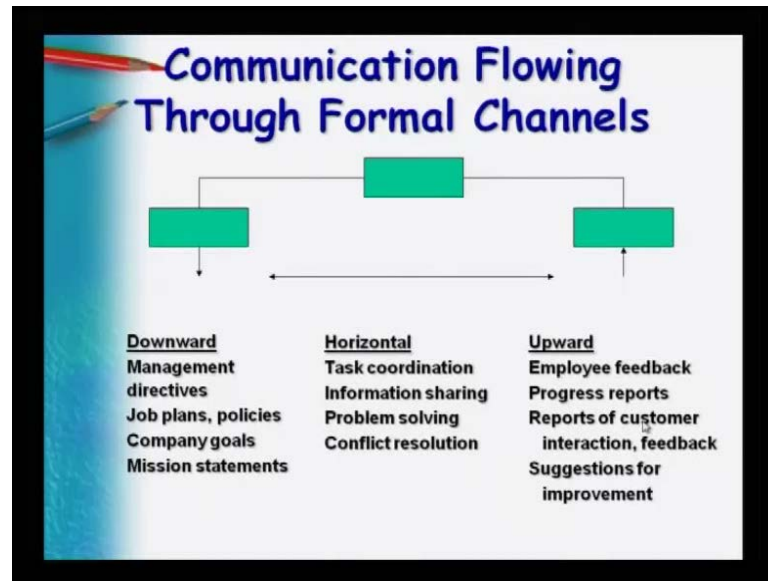
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Now, let us look at the third category, in which there are barriers to communication. This is barriers to information flow in organizations. Communication in organizational set up. Now, you will understand that, most of the times, the communication climate happens to be very closed in organizational set up, despite the fact that they can use emails and SMS and all that. This can happen because of the administrative hierarchy. So, the horizontal and vertical flow, generally it is a very bureaucratic set up. So, top to bottom. So, there is this director, then deputy director and just above these two, there is a CEO and then from the director and then this manager and between manager and deputy manager, then supervisor, overseer and then the worker, subordinate, peon and so on, watchman.

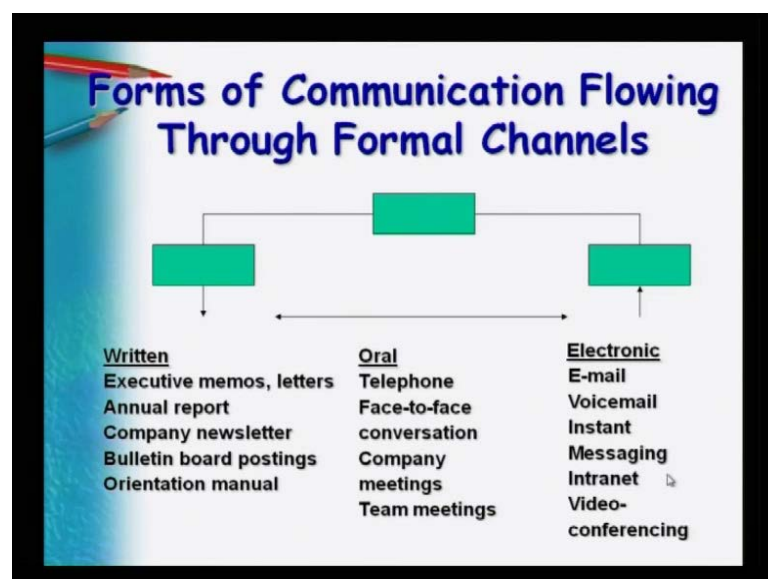
Now, long lines of communication can also cause these barriers to flow in communication. Too many transfer stations distorts and delays the message. Lack of trust between management and employees can also cause barrier. Employees, what will they do if there is no trust between management and them? They will turn to an informal system, the grapevine. They will start believing in rumors. They will start gathering information laterally and not directly. Not through the reliable source. Now, competition for power, status and rewards, so that is also trying to create this kind of grapevine environment, which should be avoided.

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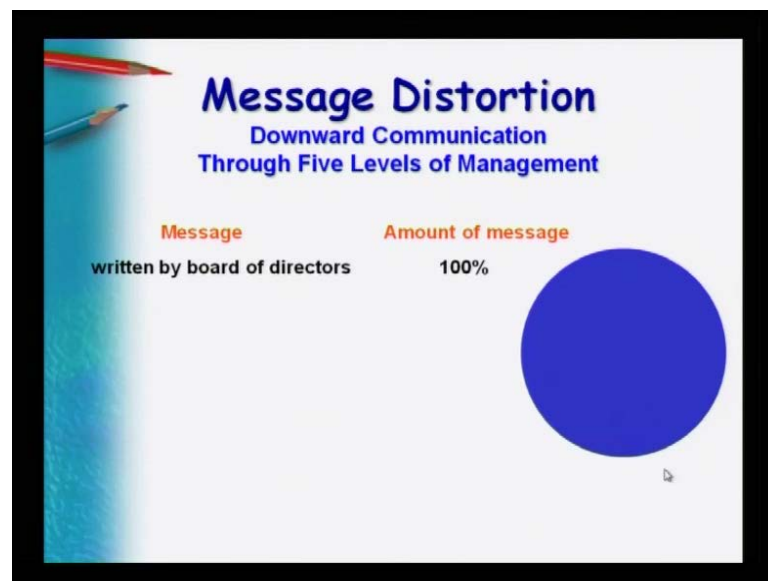
Now, look at the available models. In terms of downward management, so the management, directives, job plans, policies, company goals, and mission statements, so it all comes from the bottom to the down. In terms of horizontal ones, task coordination, so team work, information sharing, and problem solving and conflict resolution. Generally, it is believed that the more horizontally you are able to work, so the communication effectiveness can be achieved. The downward and upward, there are problems. So, upward is going from suggestions for improvement from the subordinates, reports for customer interaction, customer feedback, progress report, and employee feedback.

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So, the downward upward, generally there are barriers. Horizontal is generally the one that is encouraged. You can also look at in terms of the written, oral and electronic. In written, you have this executive memos, letters, annual report, company newsletter, bulletin board postings and orientation manual. In oral, it is telephone, face to face, conversations, company meetings, team meetings, group discussions, brain storming sessions etcetera. In terms of electronic, it is the email, voicemail, instant messaging, intranet communication, video conferencing and so on.

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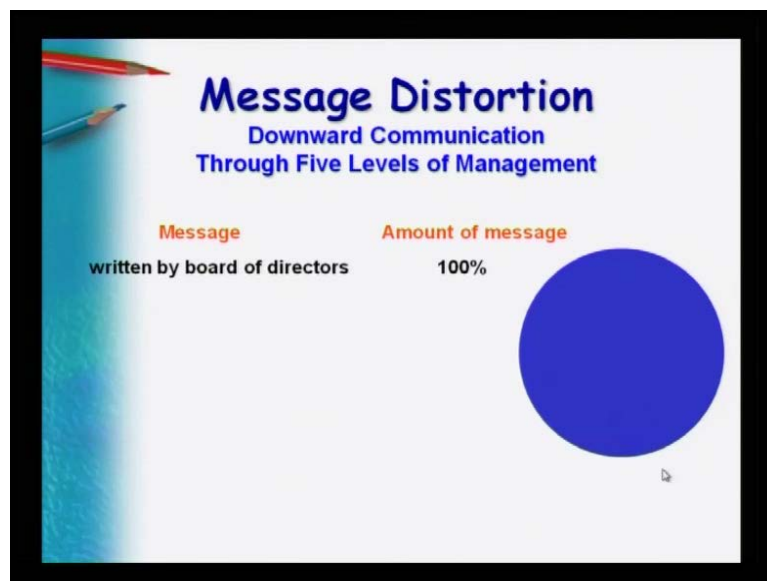


Now, another interesting example of message distortion, miscommunication that happens in downward communication and this can happen through five levels of management.

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Look at the message and the amount of message. It is believed that, when the message is first written by board of directors, it was 100 percent. The board of directors wanted to convey something and it was 100 percent.

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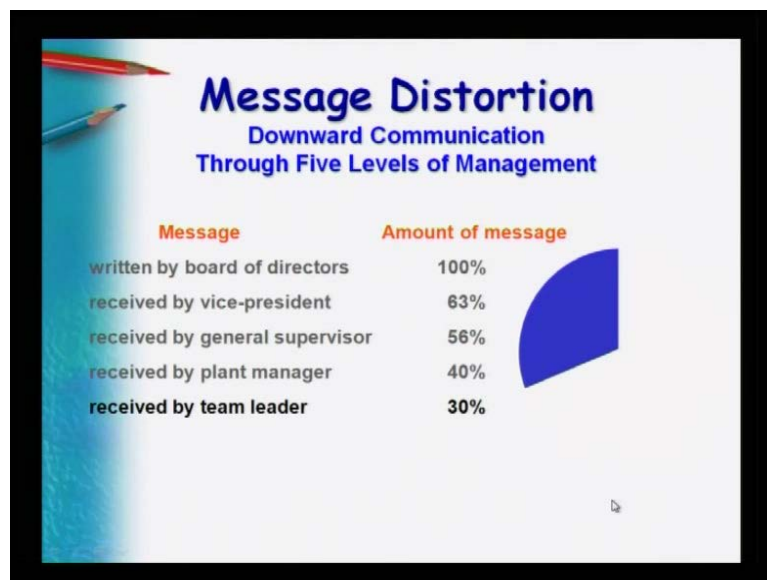


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But later, when it was received by the vice president, it became 63 percent. Then it was received by general supervisor, it became 56 six percent. Then when it was received by plant manager, it became 40 percent.

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Then, when it was received by team leader, it became 30 percent. Then when it was received by the worker, it was 20 percent. This is deplorable. This is really bad because from the top to the bottom, 100 percent communication message slowly detracted; distorted and only 20 percent of the message was received.

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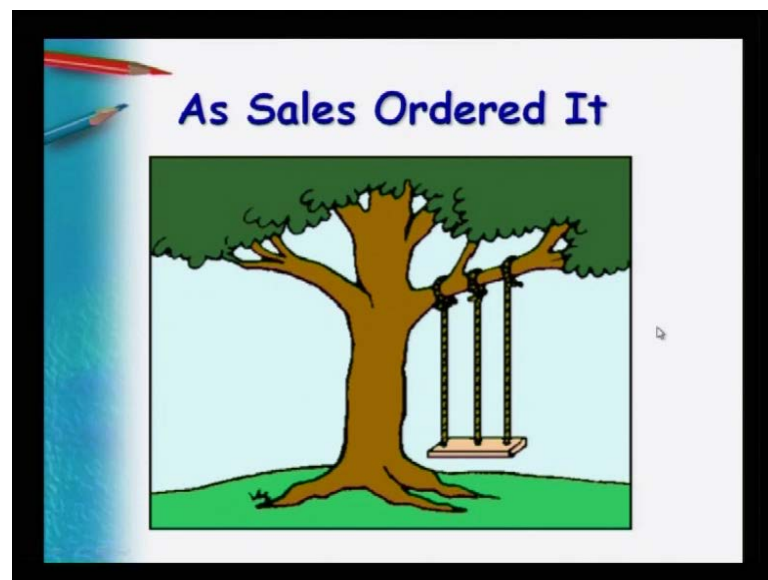
Now, another interesting example. An illustrative example of how miscommunication can happen in product evolution. Look at this picture.

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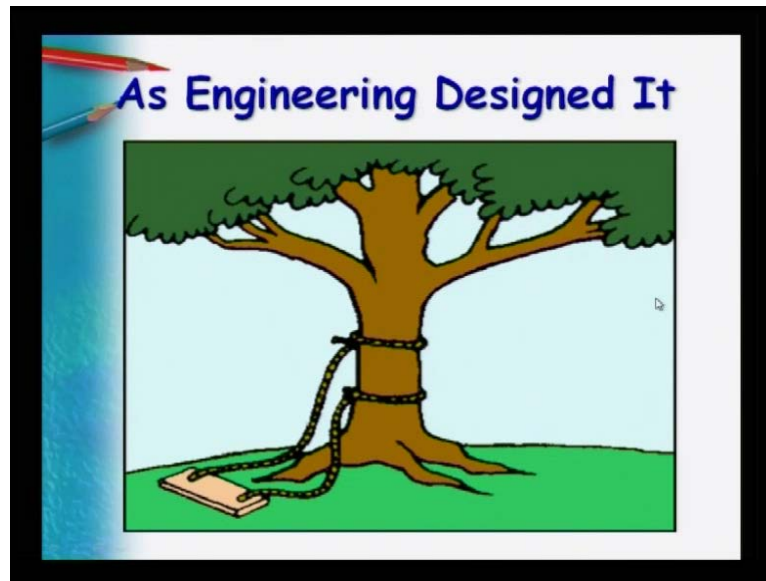
Now, this was how this was executed. The product was executed in terms of the way marketing requested it. So, it was mentioned as a 3-tier swing. So, there are 3 tiers. The marketing requested it in this way and then you can see that there are 3 tiers.

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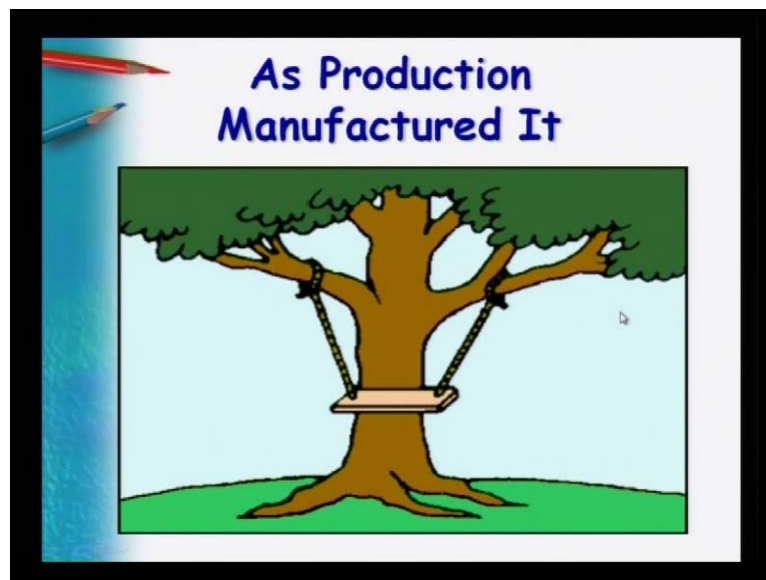
But, when sales ordered it, so the 3 tier, the 3 is there in terms of ropes dividing it in between, but it became a swing like this, when sales ordered.

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Now, when engineering designed it, actually the swing part is gone, but then the design if you could see, it become totally dysfunctional, but it does designed in that way.

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Then, when the production manufactured it, so again it manufactured it in this manner. But again you can see, it cannot function because of the trees at the other side. Then this became a problem.

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Then, how the problem was sorted out? When the maintenance installed it, it cut the tree and then it hung it and then gave some space. But again you know, but this is a very funny kind of installation and not very functional and not very effective.

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But, what was it the customer wanted actually? The customer actually wanted a simple tree-tyre swing. It was heard as 3 and not tree. So, tree tyre. They thought it is as 3 layered swing. What the customer actually wanted was a simple tree tyre swing, where the kid can sit and enjoy. So, you see how communication is distorted and how

miscommunication can happen. It appears to be funny, but then it can actually cause severe damage in communication.

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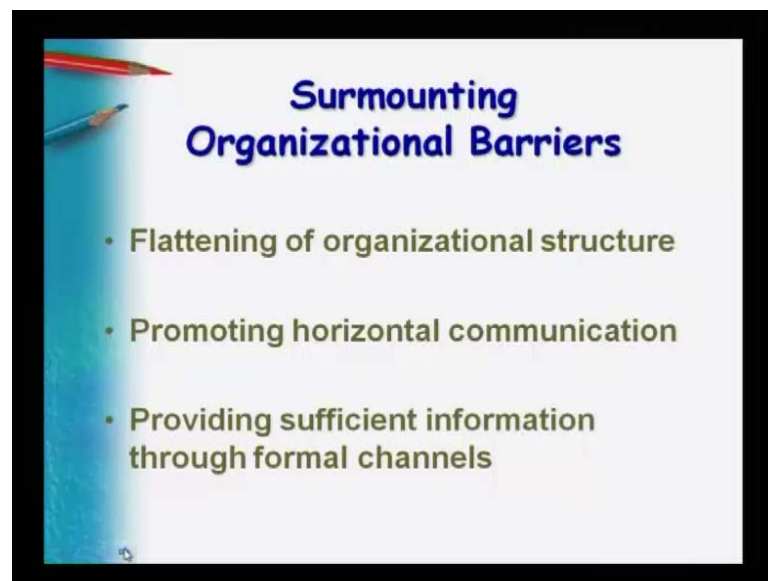
Now, coming back to the organizational barriers. How can the barriers be overcome? Now, one way we can overcome this is by modifying the communication network. Instead of using this top to bottom, the downward or the upward, if we can have direct access, so usually it will be said that, you apply it through the manager and you send it through the proper channel. The proper channel may be the head of the department. You want to complain against the head of the department to the director, but the head of the department has to forward it. So ridiculous. If you want to modify this communication network, then go for direct access. Allow the person to communicate directly with the director or the CEO of the company. Have a kind of feedback mechanism in which the person can address the problems directly.

Then, dissemination through several channels. So, suppose a message has to be passed, you can use notice board. You can put it on the notice board, send email messages, talk to somebody on phone, send SMS, have a kind of teleconferencing and orally inform them. When you meet somebody face to face, you remind them and you clarify the message. Now, use several channels by which you ensure that the message reaches the bottom most people correctly. Then use feedback system involving more than one source, which means, it will not come through only one channel. You will have so many

ways to collect feedback. You can take face to face interaction and you have a specified time in which people can come and talk to you face to face. You have SMS, you have phone calls and you allow all ways of communicating with you. So, get the feedback using more than one source. Then creating open environment for interaction and feedback. So, it is not just creating so many sources, but you should not intimidate them. So, make it open. So, if you are able to make it, the environment open, then people will come out freely and then they will be able to discuss.

In fact, if you are able to collect their feedback at various levels in terms of goals of the company, in terms of the company's performance, in terms of what they think about your own communicative effectiveness, if it is between teacher and student, if you elicit direct information from the student as how you can improve the course contents and what material you add or drop. So, the course content becomes very enriching and effective in terms of communication. So, this is something that you should aspire by increasing the number of sources and also going for open environment in terms of feedback.

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How to surmount organizational barriers? One way is to flatten the organizational structure. So, as I said, do not go for top to down, downward or upward. Just try to flatten it. Promote horizontal communication. So, one to one peer group level and by providing sufficient information through formal channels. Use many channels and give sufficient information.

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Managing Information Overload

Information Overload

- Everyday the number of documents on internet increases by 7.5 million.
- On a typical day the average office worker sends and receives over 200 messages.*

Reduction of Information Overload

- Should be sent only to those who can benefit from it
- Should contain only the main ideas

*Bovee, Business Communication Today, Delhi: Pearson Education, 2004

The slide features a blue background with a pencil illustration on the left. On the right, there are two small images: one of a person at a desk with a laptop and another of a desk completely covered in a chaotic pile of papers.

Today, the major problem is handling this information overload. Now, every day the number of documents on internet increases by 7.5 million. This was taken way back, may be some 10 years before. Now, I think it is double or triple the amount of messages we are getting and so many phone calls, so many emails, so many SMS message and then apart from that, the updates in Facebook and the social networking sites. It looks like somebody said menace become a socially networking animal now. So, how to come out of this net and how do you handle this? So, on a typical day, the average office worker sends and receives over 200 messages on average.

But there are people who are handling 1000, 2000 and 5000 messages. Quickly they see and they delete it. How can you do this? One, you should reduce this information overload and when the emails or messages are getting forwarded, it should be sent only to those people who can benefit from it. That ism it should be year marked. According to the department or according to the category it should be classified, sorted out and then sent to the person. One should not spam by sending it to a group, when it is addressed to only a particular individual and it should contain only the main ideas. So, when you are disseminating, do not crowd it with so many overload of information.

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One method that is commonly suggested is to remember this acronym, RAPID, which you can use to overcome communication barrier. The R stands for realizing that communication is imperfect. May be for various reasons like, the language ambiguity, the way we communicate it is not very perfect and we use lot of crutches in communication. We leave ambiguity. So, realize that communication is imperfect. Adapt message to receiver. So, use empathy and use language in such a manner that it is adaptable. Plan for feedback. Give room for feedback and then improve language and listening skills. Be a good listener before you want to become a good communicator. Use appropriate language. Doubt preconceptions, but you do not be prejudiced. So, if you are able to follow this, so you will be able to overcome the barriers.

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Activity

Overcoming Barriers

- Improve communication by evaluating responses to your messages.
- Change your approach by choosing another medium or by reworking your message.



As I was telling, so you can improve communication by evaluating responses to your messages and do this as an activity. Change your approach by choosing another medium or by reworking your message, especially when the communication gap happens. Change if you use phone and then go face to face and vice versa. Sometimes, even sending SMS is more effective than calling somebody and speaking on phone. So, use this change and then rework the message accordingly. That will help you to cause effectiveness in communication.

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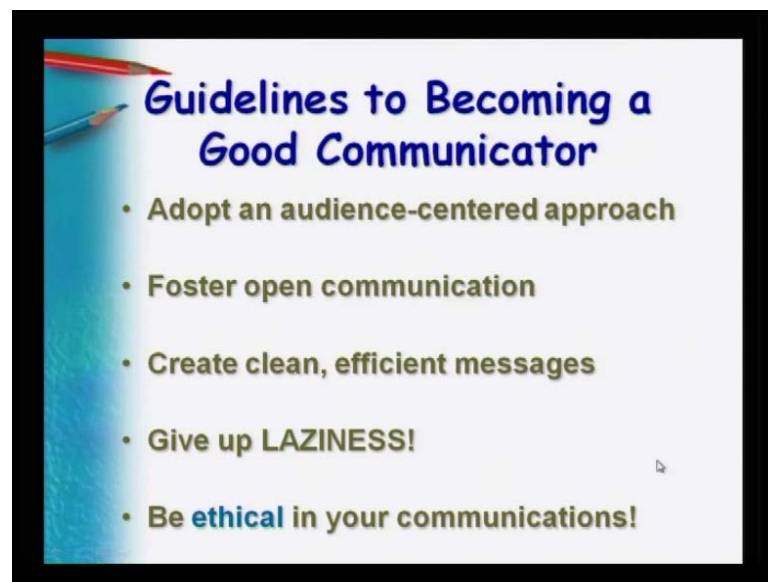
Traits of Good Communicators



- Perceptive
- Precise
- In Control
- Congenial
- Credible

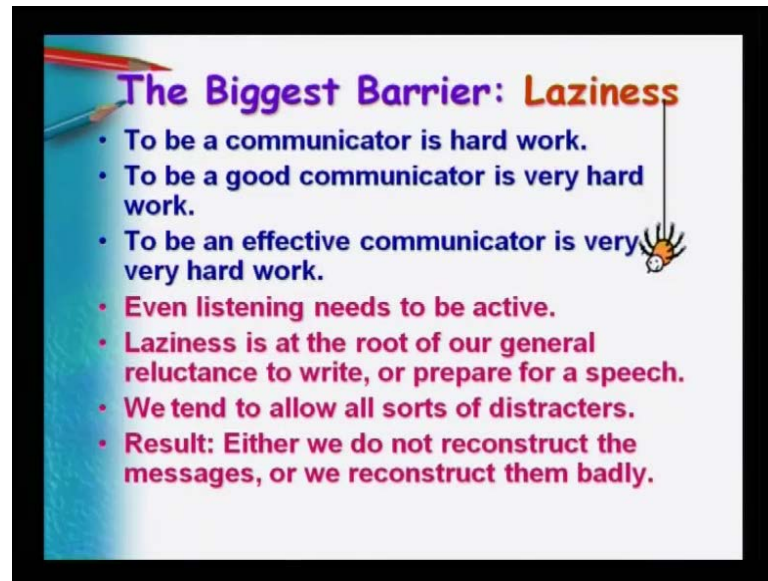
Now, let us look at some important traits of becoming good communicators and then I will talk about ethical communication before I wind up this lecture. Good communicators are perceptive. So, they are good listeners. They perceive you verbally as well as non-verbally. They are in control. That means, their emotions are in control and they are able to control their verbal as well as non-verbal behavior. They are credible, because you can trust them and you can believe them. They have created such a rapport with you. They are congenial; they are approachable; they are friendly; they are affable; you feel like going and sharing your ideas without any inhibitions and they are precise. They do not bore us to death. They talk precisely. They convey their points exactly. They do not mix words and they do not beat around the bush.

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What are the guidelines to becoming a good communicator? First, adopt an audience-centered approach. Use empathy. Put yourself in the shoes of the audience. Follow this audience-centered approach. If you were to sit there and listen to you, would you like that speech? Foster open communication. Generate open environment for communication. Create clean and efficient messages. Give up laziness. So, laziness is the major impediment and major barrier in making you an effective communicator. Give it up and be ethical in your communications. Let us look at the last two aspects of giving up laziness and becoming ethical in your communication.

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The Biggest Barrier: Laziness

- To be a communicator is hard work.
- To be a good communicator is very hard work.
- To be an effective communicator is very very hard work.
- Even listening needs to be active.
- Laziness is at the root of our general reluctance to write, or prepare for a speech.
- We tend to allow all sorts of distracters.
- Result: Either we do not reconstruct the messages, or we reconstruct them badly.

As I said, the biggest barrier is laziness. You should be able to give it up. Now, to be a communicator is hard work. Just a communicator is a hard work and to be a good communicator is very hard work and to be an effective communicator, is dam very very hard work. Even listening, which many people think is a passive skill, we are going to discuss about that very soon, but it is a very active skill. People say that, if you listen attentively, you burn calories, just like the way you would have jogged. It is a very active skill. Even that needs you to be active.

But, laziness is at the root of our general reluctance to write, general reluctance to prepare for a speech, general unwillingness in coming forward and delivering a speech and making our communication effective and meaningful. So, laziness is the root cause and the other thing associated with laziness is, we tend to allow all sorts of distractions. Especially when you are writing a document, somebody says come will go for a coffee. You go for a coffee and then the person sees the poster of a movie and he says we go for a movie. You go for a movie and then go for a dinner and then you keep on postponing or get distracted so quickly. The result, either we do not reconstruct the messages or we reconstruct them very badly.

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Guidelines to Becoming a Good Communicator...

- **Be ethical in your communications.**



Now, the last and the final point is, be ethical in your communications. Today people think that you can be effective in your communication by hook or crook. That is the end. Justifies the means. No means are as important as the ends as far as communication is concerned. You have to be ethical.

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Ethical Communication

- **Ethics** are the principles of conduct that govern a person or group.
- **Ethical Communication** includes all relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way.
- **Commit to ethical communication.**



You have to this discrimination of what is good and what is bad and try to have good intentions. Ethics, when we have talk about it is principle of conduct that govern a person or group. Now, when we say ethical communication, it includes all relevant information

and it is true in every sense and is not deceptive in any way. You should commit to ethical communication. You should not deceive people in any way. Even if you are doing business, do honest business. Be straight forward in communication.

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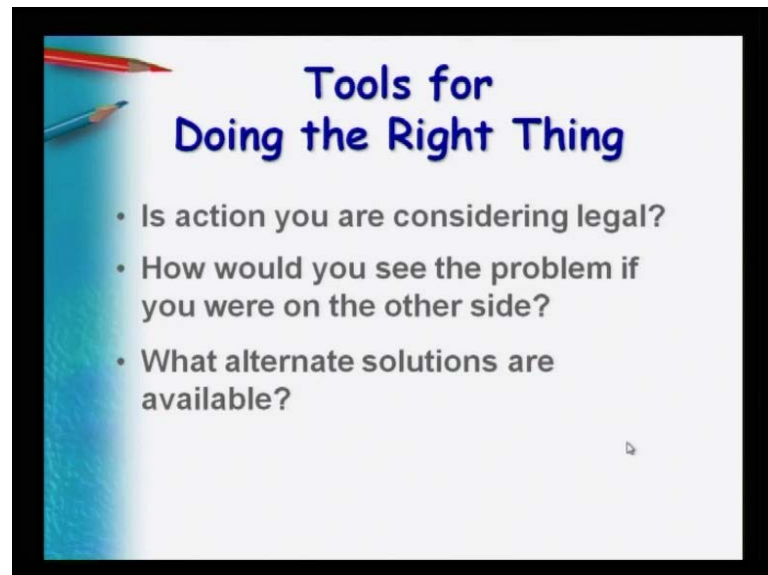
There are some quick traps, ethical traps. The common ones are categorized into 5 traps. Look at them one by one very quickly. The false necessity trap. So, this means convincing yourself that no other choice exists. Then the doctrine-of-relative-filth trap. So, this means comparing your unethical behavior with someone else's even more unethical behavior. So, you are asking that, why did you steal this 10 rupees from that guy? You say that, "Oh, that guy has stolen 1 crore. So, what is 10 rupees." So, relative filth. Rationalization trap is, justifying unethical actions with excuses. So, his mother was dying and that is why he was compelled to steal or loot money from the bank and then use it for payment for his mother's operation or something. Rationalization.

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The self-deception trap is persuading yourself. For example, that a lie is not really a lie and then the ends-justify-the-means trap; thinking that using unethical methods to accomplish a desirable goal is fine. So, it is so. So, these are ethical traps. Avoid these ethical traps.

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Tools for doing the right thing is, ask these questions. Is the action that you are considering, you ask yourself whether it is legal or are you doing something illegal. Then how would you see the problem, if you are on the other side. Will it affect you? Will you

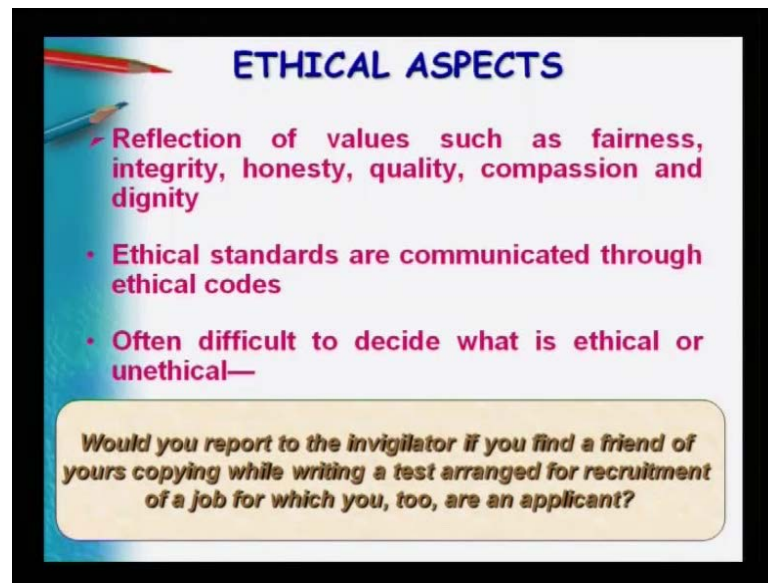
feel cheated? Will you feel disappointed? Then change the modalities. What alternate solutions are available? Is it like that there are no alternate solutions or can you find out some alternate solutions. Then go head.

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Can you discuss the problem with someone you trust? Can you share this with your mother? Can you share this with your close friend? Can you tell this to your wife? Can you tell this to a small kid? Can you be as open as that. If you hide or concede, then there is something wrong. It is not that ethical. May be, how would you feel if your family, friends, employer or co-workers learned of your action? If you feel embarrassed, humiliated, guilty, then definitely it is not ethical.

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ETHICAL ASPECTS

- Reflection of values such as fairness, integrity, honesty, quality, compassion and dignity
- Ethical standards are communicated through ethical codes
- Often difficult to decide what is ethical or unethical—

Would you report to the invigilator if you find a friend of yours copying while writing a test arranged for recruitment of a job for which you, too, are an applicant?

So, these are questions you can ask. When we talk about ethical aspect, generally it is reflection of values, such as fairness, integrity, honesty, quality, compassion and dignity. Ethical standards are communicated through ethical codes. Although one can argue that they are relative and change culturally, we all know that there are universal values. So, you know what is good and what is bad, irrespective of the fact whether you follow this religion or that religion. In terms of humanity, one knows what is good or what is bad. But there are situations, where it is often difficult to decide what is ethical or unethical. I often ask my students this questions and then I just try to debate with them whether their answers are correct or not.

The question is this. Would you report to the invigilator, if you find a friend of yours copying while writing a test arranged for recruitment of a job for which you too are an applicant. So, you and your friend, both of you are writing this competitive exam. In which, your friend is doing some kind of malpractice. Would you reveal that or not? Now, the ethics of present generation is changed so much. The majority of the students, their impulsive response is to say no. Why? Will you not lose your job? They said no. I do not mind. I do not want to inform the examiner about my friend because I want to save him.

Now, the actual answer, if your moral and ethical quotient is very high, it is like this. Of course, I will actually expose my friend. I will actually inform the examiner and I will

stop him from copying. Not because of I am afraid that I will not get a job, but because of I am more concerned about him and I do not want him to get that job by doing some malpractice, because he will lose his confidence in himself and he will become a highly dishonest fellow as he climbs up in the social ladder. In order to avoid this and teach him a lesson, so I will inform and it is better that it is nipped at the bud and then he does not develop his habit further. If he is my true friend, he will realize my intention and then he will come back to me. I will apologize. I will make all possible reconciliations. I will make my channel open and I will wish that he understands me. But I will report to the invigilator. That is ethically good and correct way of behaving in that kind of situation.

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Thank you so much for listening to this. Now, there are some books that you can refer to. Bovee and Courtland et al, the book on Business Communication Today, written by Bovee and group, published by Pearson education. There is also this book, Excellence in Business Communication, again by Bovee and then John V.Thill. Business Communication: Process and Product, so this is by Mary Ellen Guffey. This also a book that you can use for further reading. Of course, Monippally's book on Business Communication Strategies. Some very interesting and funny examples are given here, which you can use it especially if you want to gain some personal insides. So, these anecdotal experiences are so powerful that you will not forget them so easily.

So, in this module, if you look at it, we had 3 lectures. We started talking about the barriers to communication and while talking about it, we focused initially on the kind of barriers which happen at the personal level. We also identified that whatever is happening is basically at the psychological level, then the emotional level and then we tried to see how to resolve those barriers and to make the communication effective. Then we discussed in the second lecture of this module on the transactions which are happening at interpersonal level and how the barriers are there. In this part, we focused more on the organizational setup, where there are barriers and towards the end of it, not only I talked about overcoming the barriers, but also I talked to you about being ethical in your communication, along with ways by which you can become a good communicator. Follow these steps and try to inculcate this sense of ethical goodness in your communication.

You will not only become an effective communicator or good communicator, but an ethically effective communicator, which is the need of the hour, which is very important at this stage and this age that we are living in, the age where cybercrime has become so common. Your ethics is very important when you are communicating. So, hopefully I think that these 3 lectures in this module has contributed to giving you lots of tips on overcoming the barriers and making yourself an effective communicator. Go through these tips and try to implement them in your day to day life and then progress day by day. Each day you try to use one or two tips which are given here and I am sure the day will come, when you will become an effective communicator. Wish you all the best. We will meet in the next module. Until then I say bye and then wishing you once again good luck.

Thank you.