



Association for
Talent Development

For the HR/OD Professional – BLOG 2

My Texting Got Me in Trouble

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Part 2 of My Leadership Blog Series

“I know you think you understand what you thought you heard me say. But what you think *you heard me say isn't what I really meant*” [unknown author]. Texting caused my daughter and me to fight. She misunderstood my message sent via texting; and obviously, I misunderstood her response sent via texting to my message. We tried to achieve understanding of information between each other, and ended up fighting.

The definition of communication is a “process involving an exchange and understanding of information between two or more people” [dictionary]. This does not mean that two or more people must agree with the information. This definition is telling us to communicate in 3-D: discover barriers, demonstrate listening and direct actions. 3-D communicate is about paying attention to what is being said, first; and then interpreting it correctly before responding. 3-D communication is transactional. It has a beginning and it has an end with the message in the middle. It's the middle that matters.

Let's go back to my daughter and me fighting. I choose texting. My bad!

The first “D” in 3-D is discovering barriers. A message is often misunderstood because we all see the world differently through our own rose colored glasses. Some of the differences of our misunderstandings are past experiences, assumptions, expectations, knowledge, personal moods and values.

Texting was the wrong channel to use when sending a very complex message to my daughter. For me, texting was quick and to the point. For her, texting was the beginning of our misunderstanding. I did not consider the channel for my message. In other words, I should have paused in my communication process to ask myself this question: “what channel best fits my message to be understood by my daughter?”

The channel is the form we use to send our message i.e. meeting, telephone, texting, Facebook, email, face-to-face, and more. Choose your channels intentionally to fit your messages.

The second “D” in 3-D is demonstrating active listening. Active listening helps bring understanding to the interaction. Ronee, my daughter and I decided to meet in person to “clean up the messy communication” and try to “pave the way to effective communication.” With face-to-face, we were able to by-pass message overload, rapid thoughts, physical noise, faulty assumptions and defensiveness to work toward an agreement.

The third “D” in 3-D is directing the action. By choosing the face-to-face channel of communication, Ronee and I were able to use symbolic gestures to support our exchange of information, like nodding in agreement in support of each other. Because we are family, we hugged afterwards. That was the best symbolic gesture of all.

In summary, I don’t like to fight with anyone, especially my daughter. I have a feeling you don’t like to fight either. Well, then here’s how to avoid fighting with anyone:

- Know the purpose of your message before you send it.
- Know the channel that fits best with your message to achieve understanding.
- Know how to send your message.

Apply the 3-D communication model when communicating with family, colleagues, team members, customers and management.

Author

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