



Communication Effectiveness

Feedback Report

Personalized Report For: Sample Report

Completed: 3/4/2017

Introduction

This Communication Effectiveness Feedback Report consists of six components, which are described below.

1. Overall Summary

The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in the seven competencies that make up the Communication Effectiveness profile. The areas to concentrate on are those scores above 3.5 (strong) and below 2.75 (need further development). Please note that these competency scores are averages; individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the individual competency link.

2. Category Descriptions

There are three sections for each of the seven competencies. The first of these three sections explains the competency, lists average scores, and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second section provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third section provides broadly-based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies.

3. 10/10 Report

The "10/10" Report page provides the raw scores for the 10 highest scoring questions and the 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies which competency each question is from.

4. Course and Reading Suggestions

Development suggestions for the two lowest scoring competencies, including specific recommendations regarding training courses and books that will provide useful information on the topic are included.

5. Development Plan

The development plan lists questions with the five lowest scores from the assessment and puts them into a one-page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take over the next twelve months based on the general guidance offered in their feedback report and the coaching tips.

6. Coaching Tips

Detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions are provided in this section. They offer specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills in this competency and learn new behaviors.

Note on 360 Degree Feedback

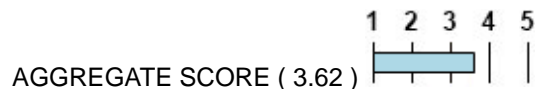
If you received feedback from your supervisor, direct reports or peers using this assessment, please note the following: Ratings responses from all persons who completed the assessment are averaged to produce the results in the 10/10 Report, Course and Reading Suggestions, Development Plan, and Coaching Tips.

Overall Summary



Empathizing

This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: "How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?"



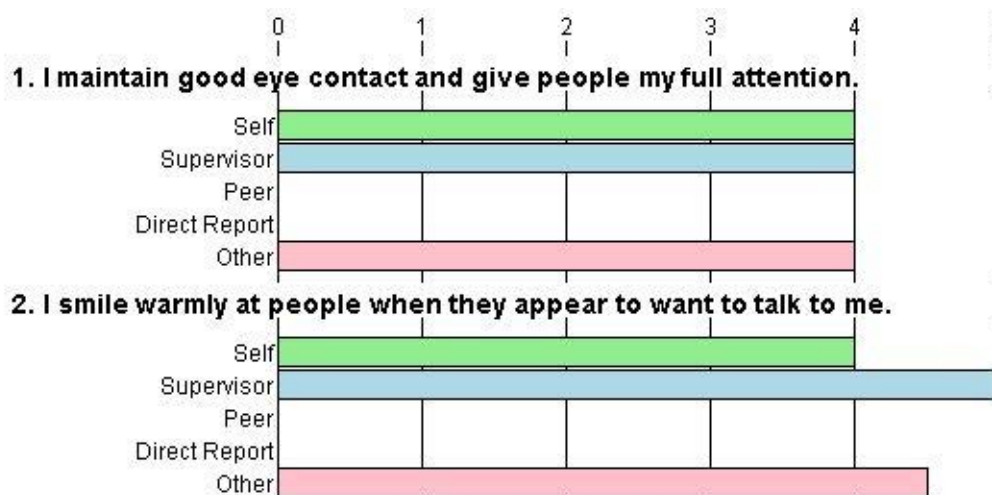
Interpretation

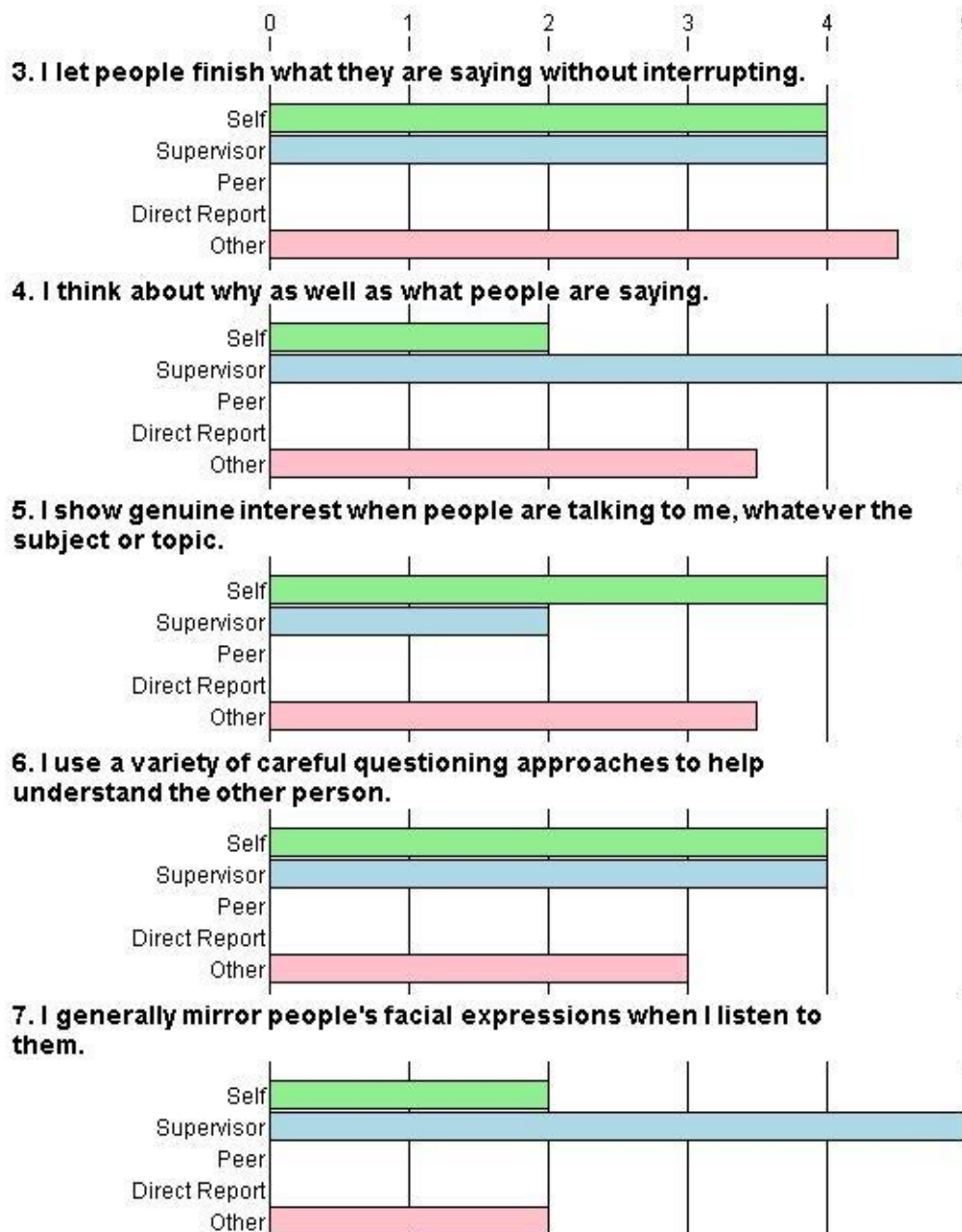
LOW (less than 2.75)

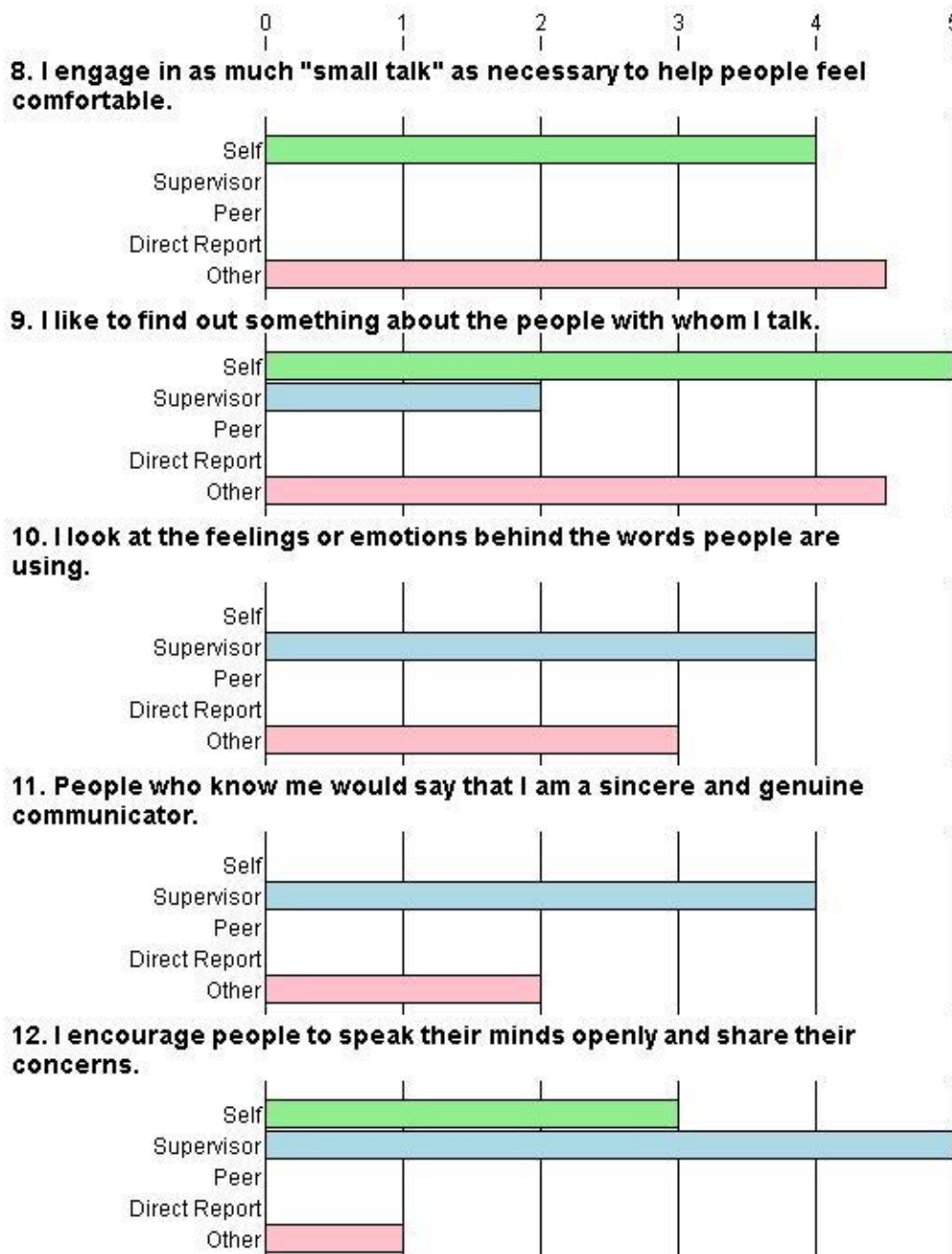
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you have a more "transactional" communication style, where a discussion or conversation is only a functional exchange of words. You are not likely to consider any circumstantial context or feelings, and you show a tendency to push your own agenda or communication priorities at the expense of the other party. An individual who scores low in this area will usually keep their communication very direct, putting personal outcomes or needs at the forefront. Such people tend to interrupt frequently and guess what the other person is going to say before he or she says it. Because of this, they often miss important parts of the overall message and create the impression that they have only a limited attention span for deeper or more complex issues.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you naturally generate a spirit of warmth toward others, and offer lots of help and support in facilitating an easy "flow" of two-way conversation. You usually listen attentively and adapt or adjust your personal style to suit the situation as much as necessary to create the best possible climate. A high score indicates that you're likely to spend as much time as necessary engaging in "small talk" or conversation that helps you understand where the other party is coming from so you can offer supportive and insightful comments that can help to open up the discussion. You try to establish the most appropriate communication climate for the circumstances, and offer an empathetic ear.







This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: "How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

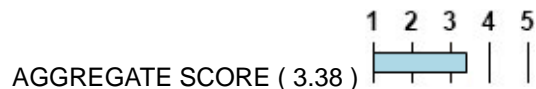
Low scorers need to develop an ability to generate more warmth and sincerity in all their conversations, and show genuine care and interest in what other people have to say on a consistent basis. This will involve being more patient, taking more time to engage in "small talk," and trying to appreciate the other person's feelings and emotions just as much as the words that they hear.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Empathizing

- Try to smile at people more often, and be as friendly and sincere as you can when they are talking to you.
- Make a strong effort to put yourself in the other person's position and to imagine what they might be feeling or where they might be coming from in sending their message.
- Let people express their thoughts and feelings fully without interrupting, as much as you can.
- Discover areas of common interest with each person you communicate with regularly, and use this to help build your relationship with them.
- Openly share your interests with other people, and encourage them to share their interests with you.

Receiving the Message

This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully "process" what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: "How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?"



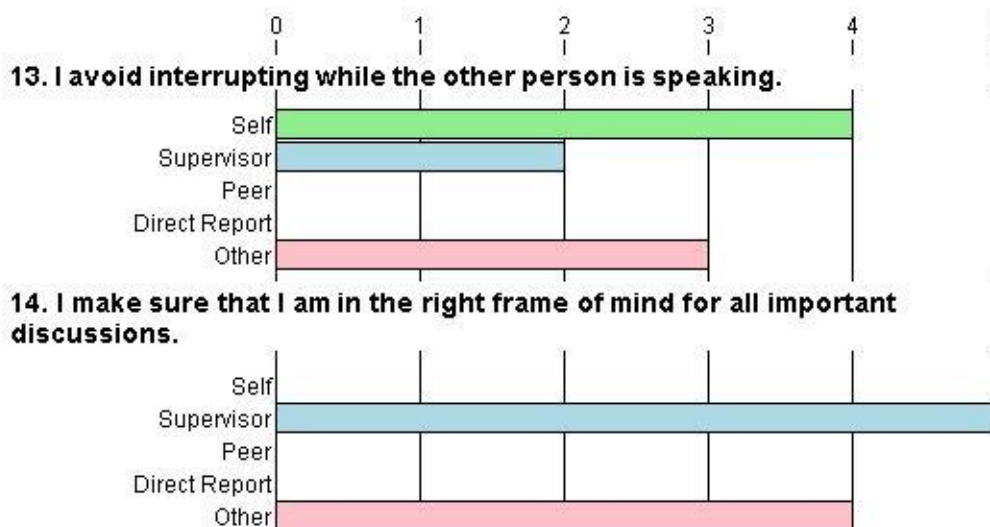
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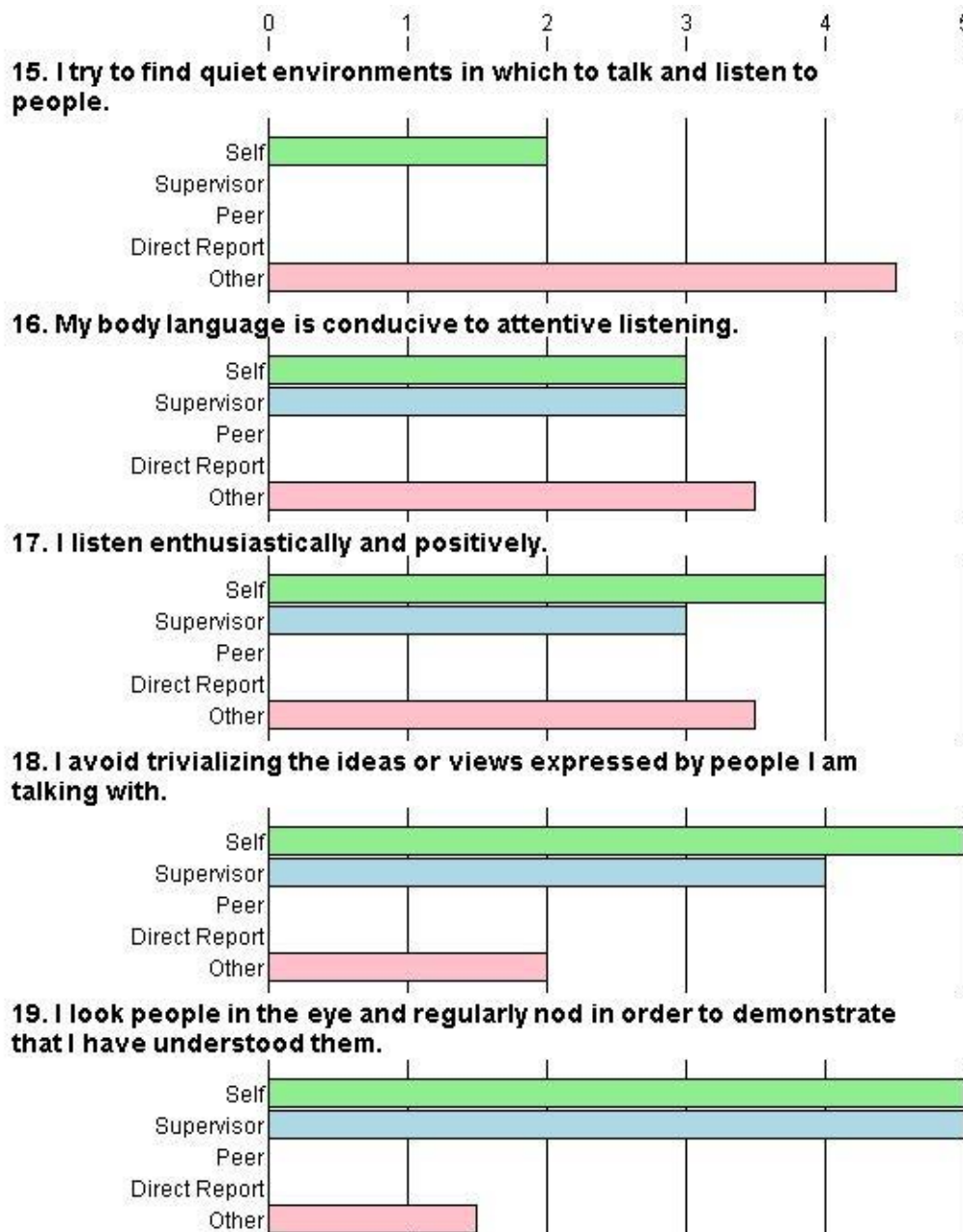
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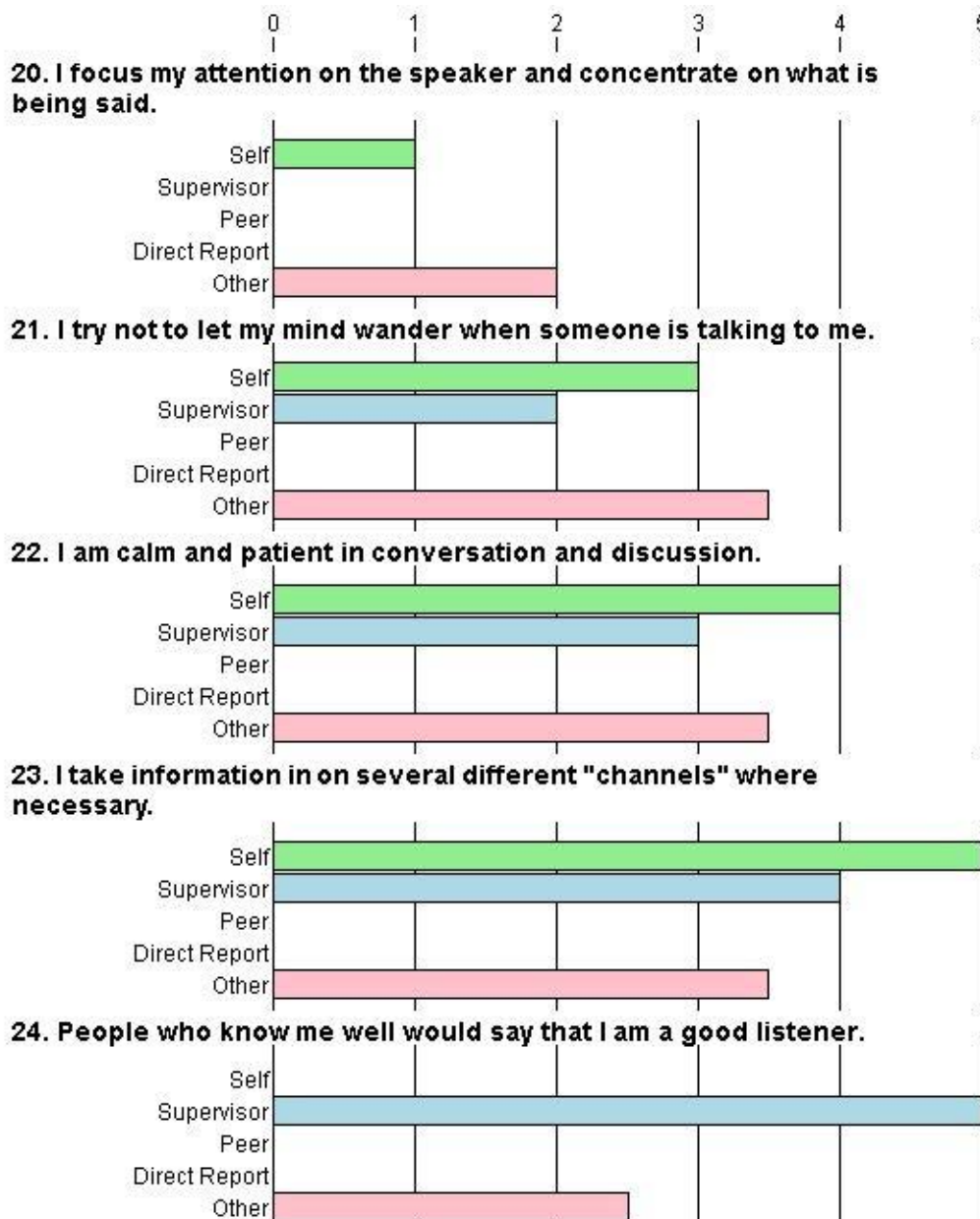
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you do not always fully appreciate what people communicate, and thus you miss important components of the overall message. You are also prone to being easily distracted, and tend to jump into conversations before the other person has finished speaking. An individual who scores low in this area is likely to find communication frustrating or even confusing. This is sometimes the speaker's fault, but more likely it is one result of poor listening habits the listener hasn't focused or taken enough time to "hear" the complete message, and the mind has been allowed to wander to other things and other priorities or tasks.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are an attentive listener and appreciate the "tenor" of most communications, in whatever form they are conveyed. You are genuinely interested and you try to concentrate on what people are saying, maintaining a calm and patient demeanor so people can get their message across without interruption. High scorers are appreciative and attentive listeners who freely give all their attention to the speaker in order to hear and appreciate the complete message. A person who scores high in this area makes an especially valuable contribution when important or complex information needs to be communicated for insight or comment.







This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully "process" what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: "How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

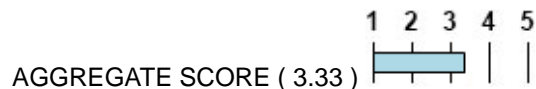
Low scorers need to speak less and listen more. To do this, they need to find more-conducive listening environments, avoid interrupting, and keep their minds from wandering. Most of all, they need to try to quietly hear the whole message being communicated, without jumping in too soon.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Receiving the Message

- Nod or show that you have understood in other ways at regular points in any conversation.
- Maintain as much direct eye contact as you can, and show genuine and focused interest in the communication.
- Avoid showing any distraction, physical or mental.
- Try to be as calm, quiet, and patient as you can in general conversations (especially with quieter people).
- Focus on and between the words that you hear in order to appreciate the sender's full communication.

Clarifying

This section on Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"



Interpretation

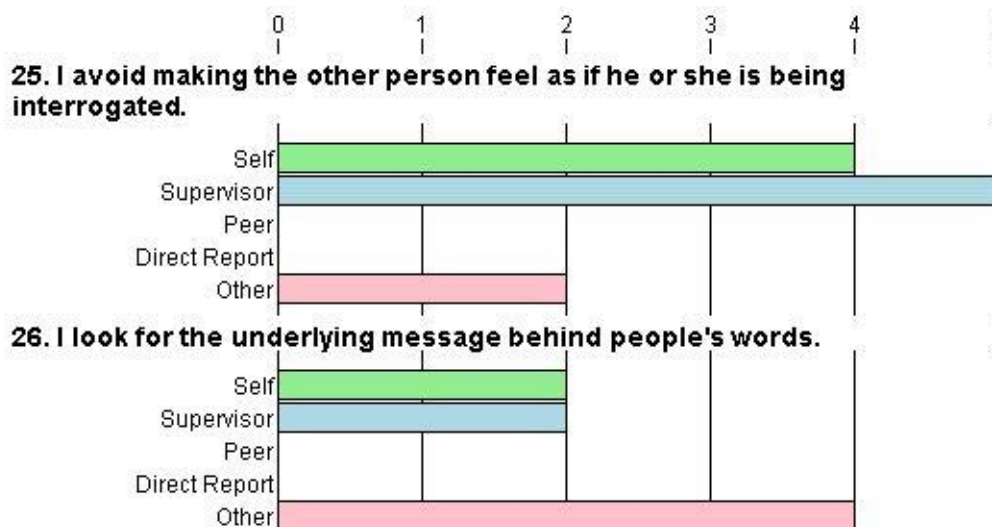
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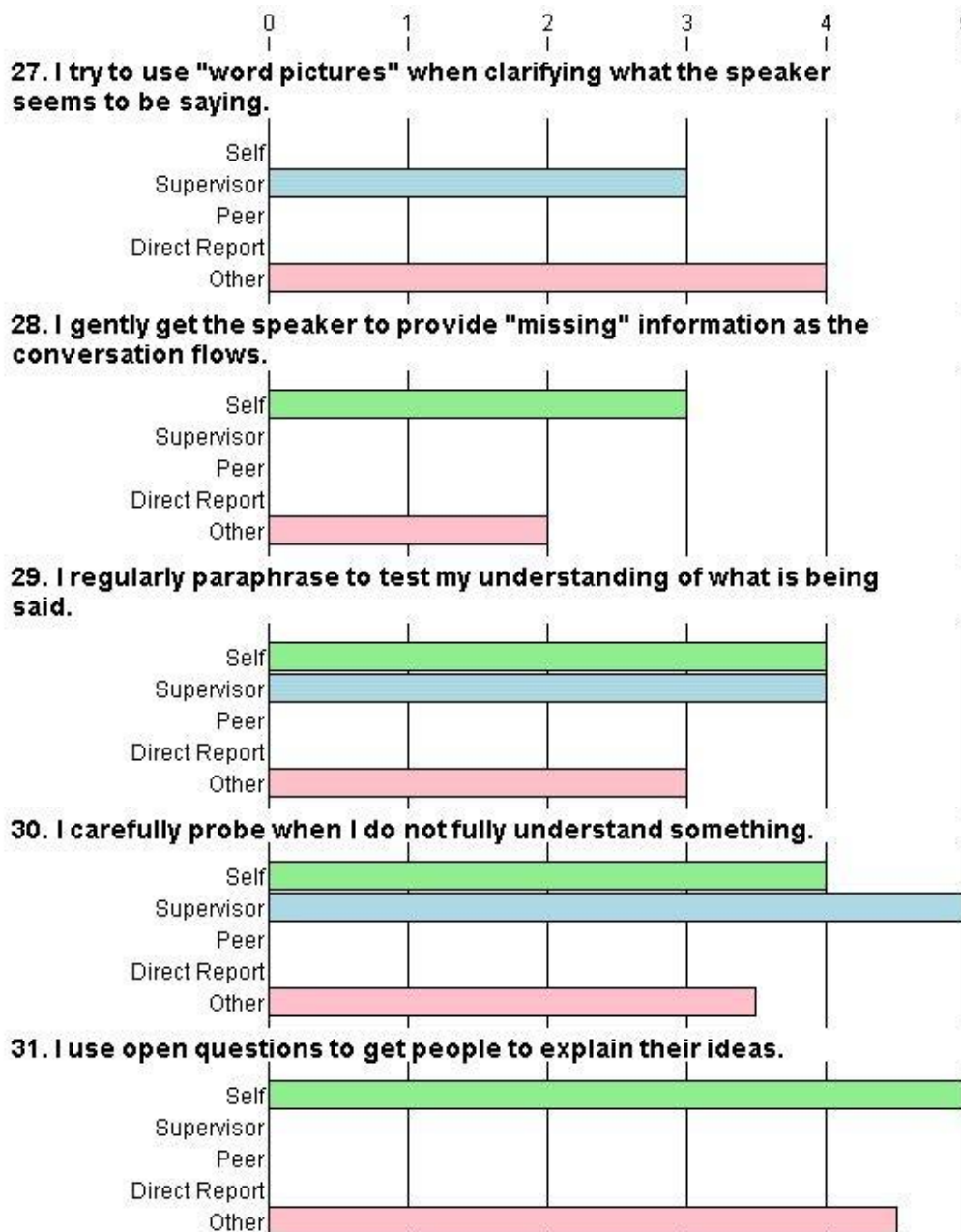
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely use questions to increase your understanding, or your questions are somewhat vague or give the impression that you have not been listening or are not interested in all the other person has to say. An individual with a low score generally engages in highly "transactional" discussions and conversations; questions of clarification are asked only rarely. These individuals are unlikely to summarize or paraphrase the sender's message, thus creating the impression that their mind is elsewhere. They will usually ask questions only when they want more information on subjects that are of interest to them.

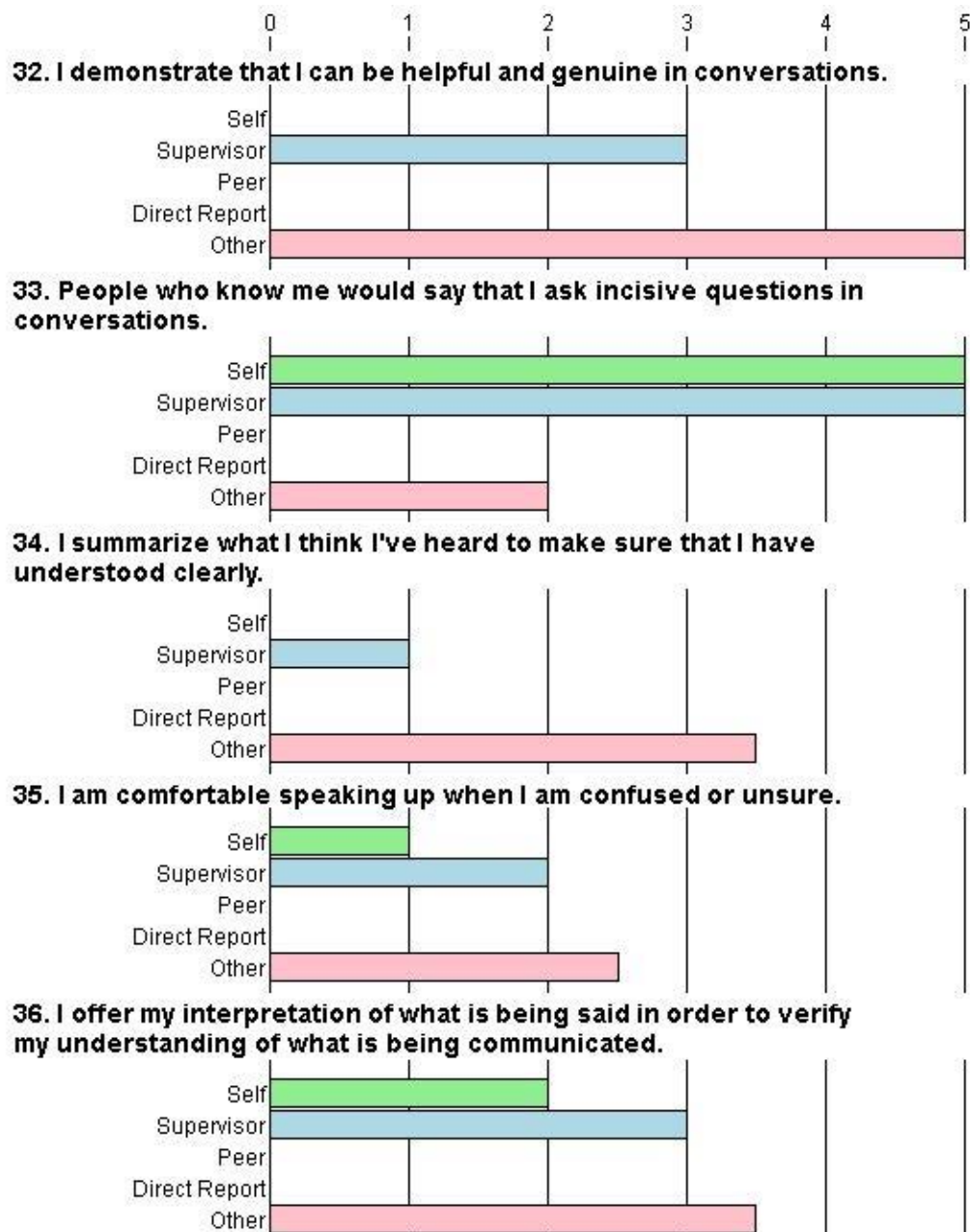
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are skilled at using a variety of conversational techniques in order to check information without making the other party uncomfortable, or feel that they are being interrogated. You generally adopt a gentle and careful questioning approach whenever you feel unsure or are not clear about the message being transmitted.

A high score suggests that the individual is likely to create a climate in which the speaker sees that the listener is concentrating and trying to completely understand the communication. This is achieved by using questions to demonstrate openness and demonstrating a genuine desire to understand, rather than showing off superior knowledge or asking a question for the sake of saying something.







This section on **Clarifying** looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

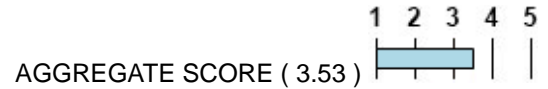
Low scorers need to practice asking genuine and sincere questions when their understanding in a discussion is less than it should be. They should also practice asking different kinds of questions, and offer simple summaries of key points at appropriate conversational intervals.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Clarifying

- Practice asking questions in a variety of different ways so you will be able to get people to say more or to elaborate fully on what they mean.
- Use more paraphrasing, examples, and analogies when you are clarifying what you hear, or ask the other person directly to explain what they are saying in a different way.
- Summarize points frequently and make sure that you have understood each statement that has been made as a discussion unfolds.
- Try to elicit more information whenever necessary to ensure that your knowledge and understanding about what is being said is balanced and complete at all times.

Understanding

This section on Understanding looks at the extent to which you make sense of what you see and hear in order to engage fully in a conversation and respond intelligently, according to the circumstances. This category asks the question: "How well do you reflect and process information while someone is speaking, in order to understand the key aspects of what is being communicated and how you might respond?"



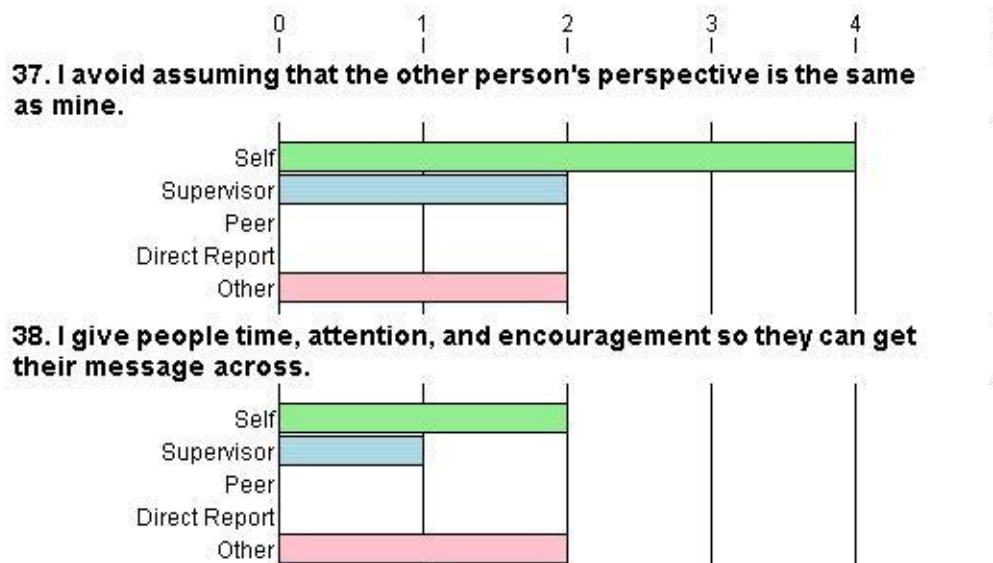
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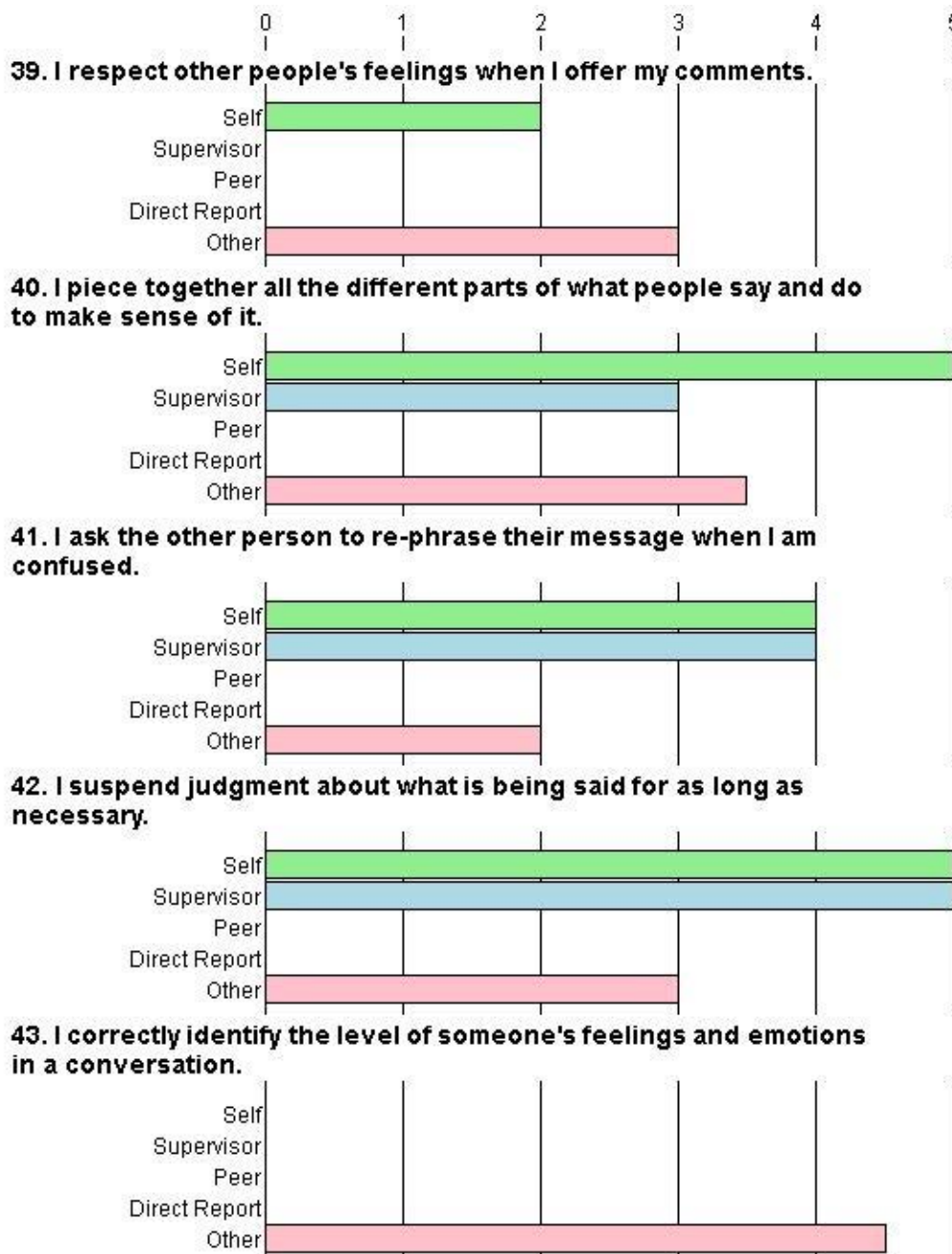
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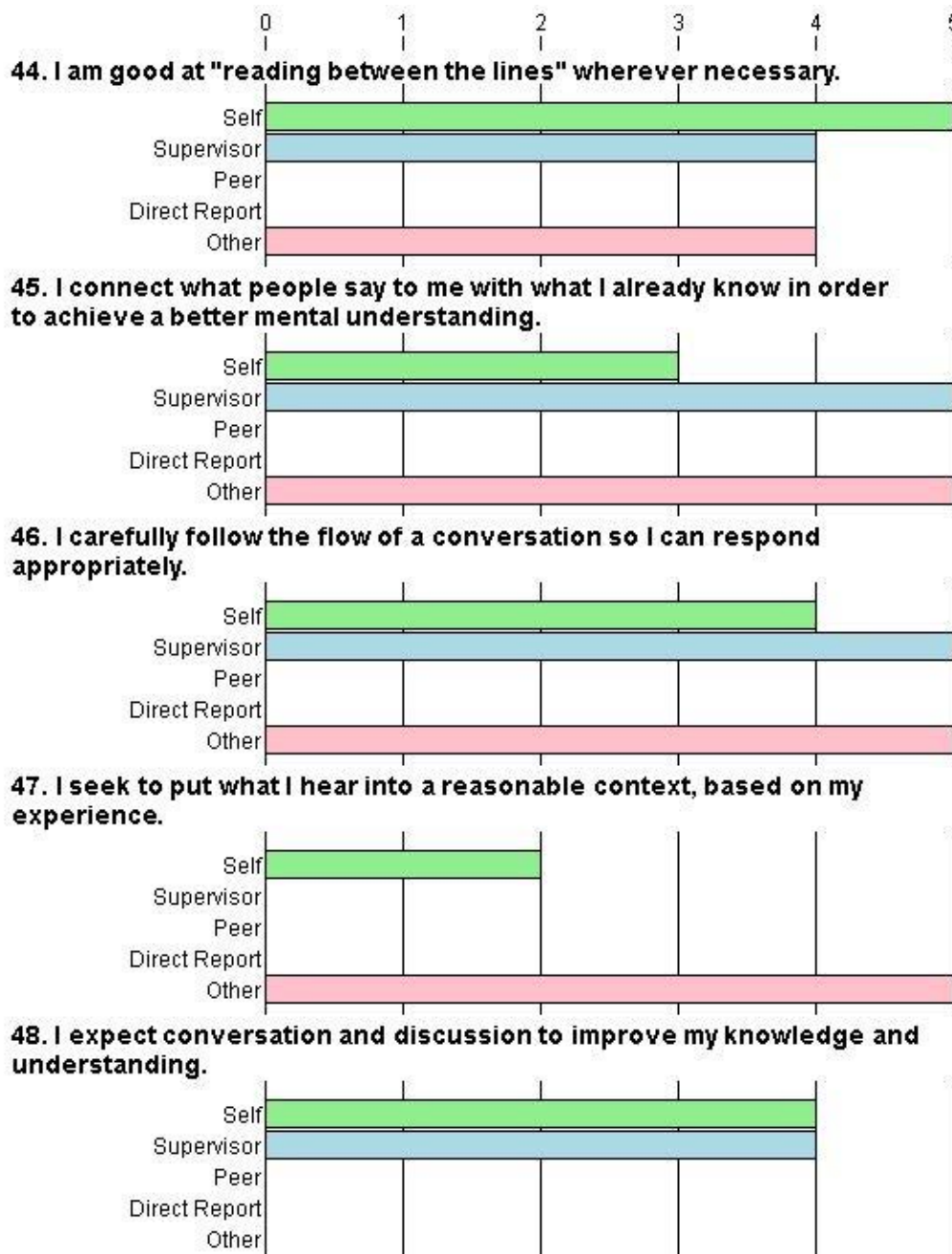
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you tend to be lost in longer or more-complex conversations, and fail to spot the more subtle or underlying messages that are communicated. You do not usually take the opportunity to reduce or eliminate your confusion by asking questions, paraphrasing, or summarizing. A low scorer does not always follow another person's line of discussion or argument and doesn't find it easy to predict where the conversation is headed. As a result, such people don't participate as actively in a conversation as they might, and their responses are not as helpful and intelligent as they could be.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you carefully sift and sort what you see and hear when individuals are talking. You work hard to understand the entire message, and respond in a way that amply demonstrates your understanding. A high scorer uses empathetic listening techniques and avoids making judgments regarding how other people think or send their messages. They will progressively assemble the information that is communicated, and look beyond the words to feelings, emotions, and other contextual factors.







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Recommendations for Overall Improvement

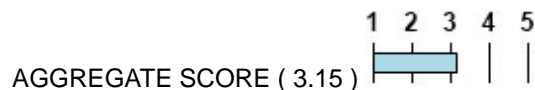
Low scorers should take note of all the verbal and non-verbal clues and figure out what is really being said, and why. They also should concentrate more on the overall "flow" or logical development of each conversation, and ask questions and paraphrase to be sure they are not misunderstanding the message.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Understanding

- Avoid pre-judging people's messages or intentions. Concentrate on the entire communication over as long a time as is necessary.
- Look for key themes or core points in conversations.
- Use questions to confirm your understanding before responding.
- Carefully assess the context in which people give you information and the entire way in which they communicate with you.

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

This section on "Reading Non-Verbal Clues" looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: "How well do you assess the other person's feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?"



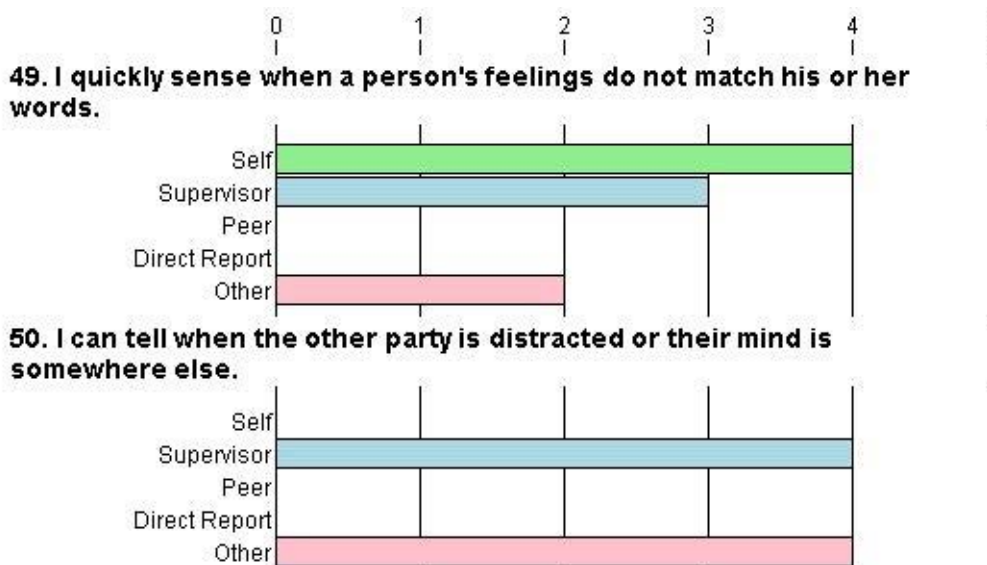
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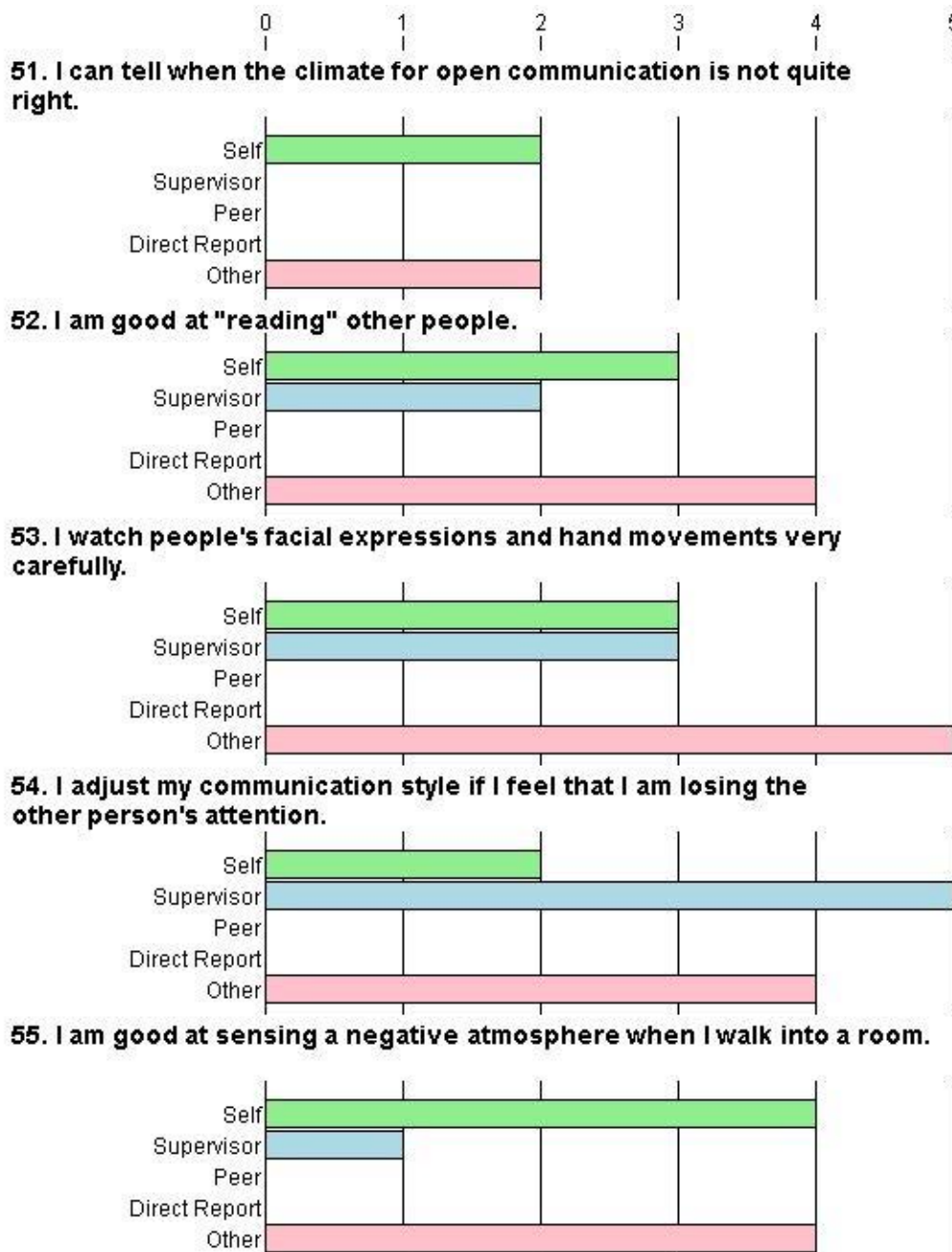
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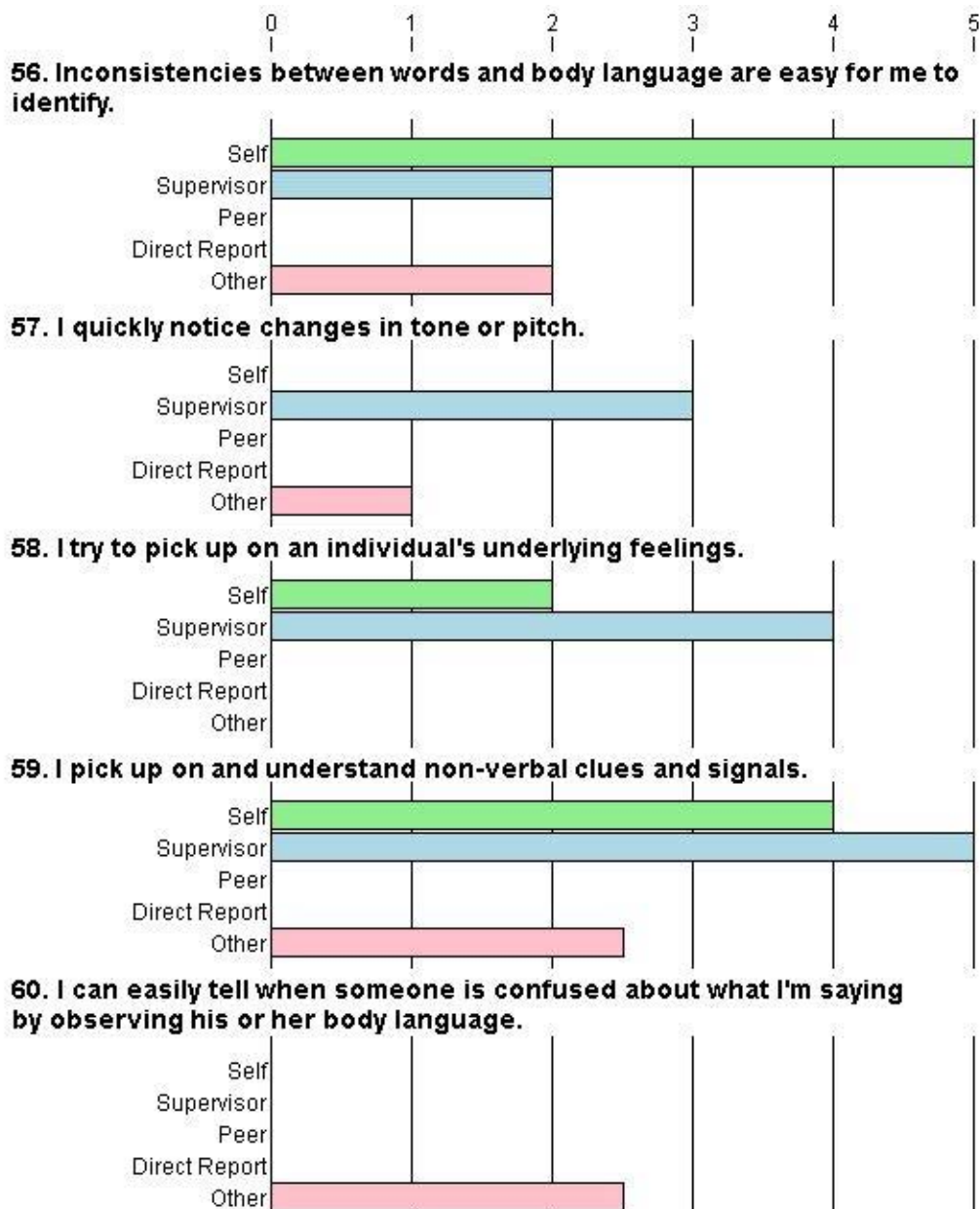
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you generally miss or misinterpret non-verbal clues given by others because you don't see their significance or understand what they mean. Because of this, you are not likely to be good at reading other people, sensing the climate for communication, or spotting general discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal messages. A low scorer tends to be almost completely reliant on the words that people use in communication, though words are only about 10% of the entire meaning. Low scorers are also somewhat oblivious to clues from facial expressions, movements of the hands or feet, changes in inflection and tone, and other behaviors that help paint a complete picture of what people are saying and feeling.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are tuned in to the non-verbal clues or signals that are deliberately or accidentally offered by other people in different kinds of communication. You are usually alert to the signals and are able to interpret them successfully. A high scorer focuses as much on non-verbal communication as on the words being spoken, and constantly looks for reinforcement of underlying feelings or inconsistency. Such people tend to almost intuitively "read" people and situations, even where words are few or non-existent.







This section on "Reading Non-Verbal Clues" looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: "How well do you assess the other person's feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

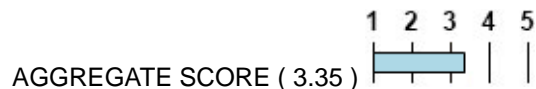
Low scorers need to concentrate much more on observing the other person and listening carefully for changes in voice tone or emotional emphasis. This takes considerable practice, as well as commitment and patience, to learn how to do it and then to correctly interpret what is observed or heard.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Reading Non-verbal Clues

- Quietly watch for the more subtle signals given by the communicator in terms of their physical actions or the tone of their voice.
- Be silent for much longer than you are used to.
- Progressively learn what the different non-verbal signals mean, above and beyond the words.
- On every occasion, assess whether or not the entire communication climate or atmosphere offers any extra clues above and beyond the words alone.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

This section on Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?"



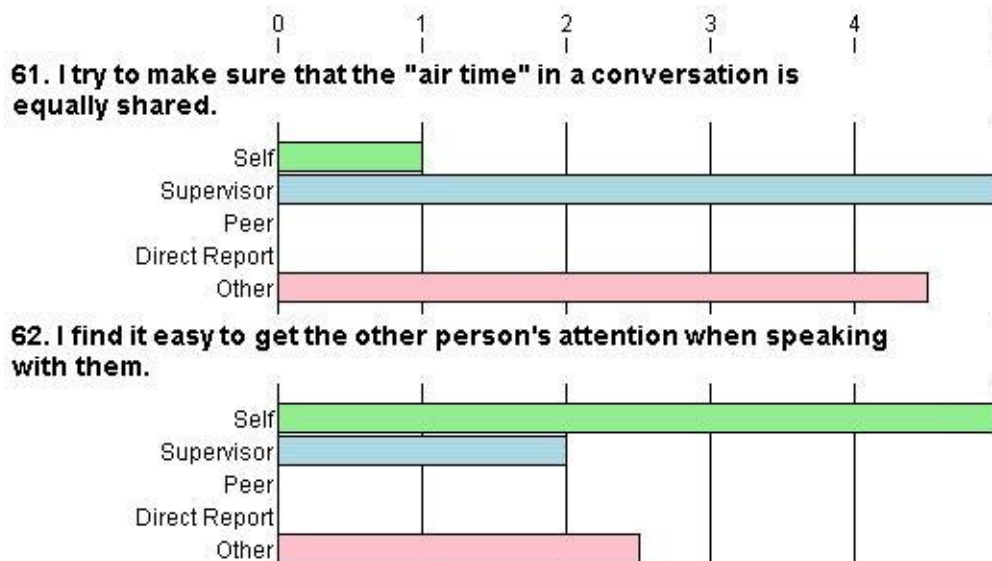
Interpretation

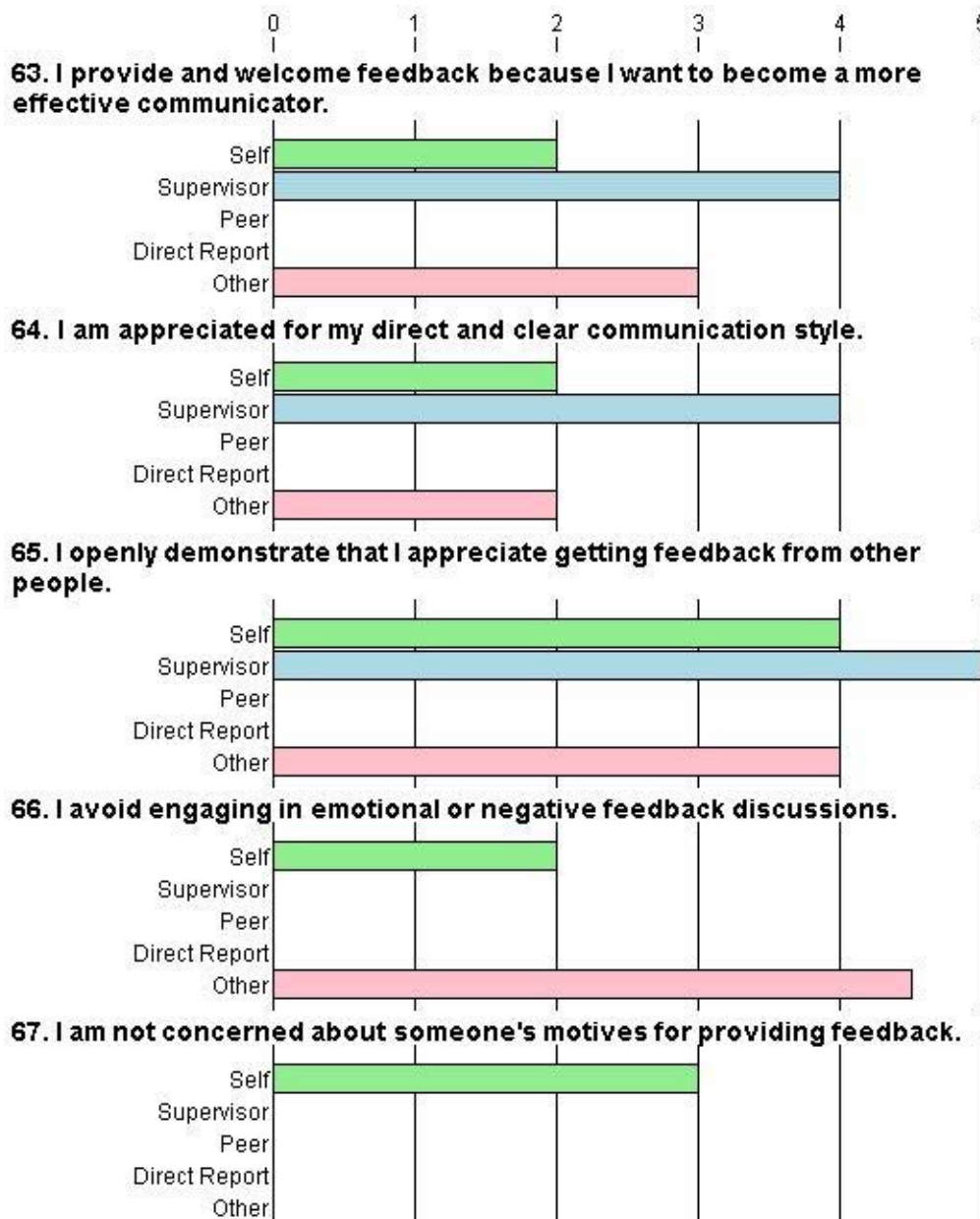
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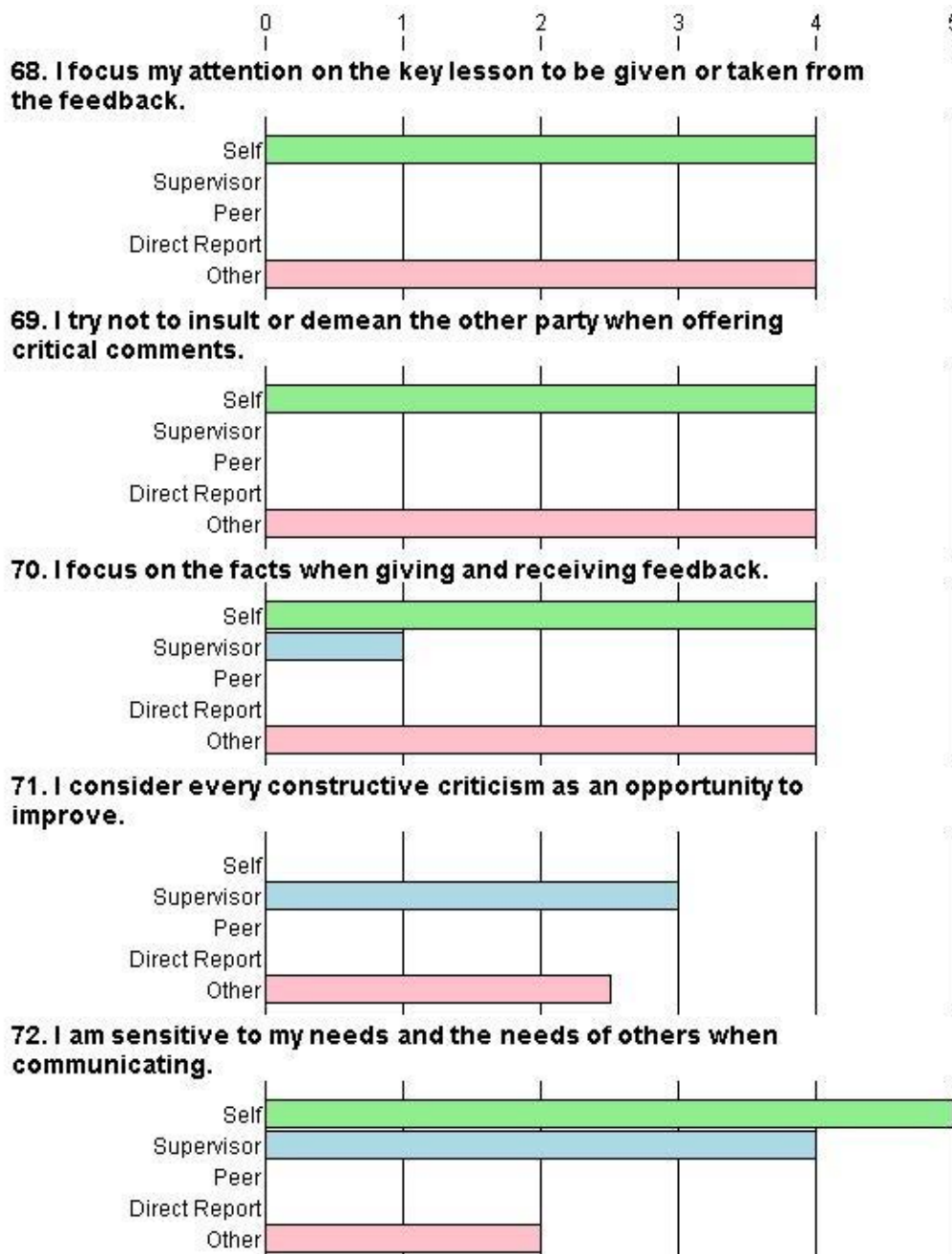
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are not a frequent giver and receiver of feedback of any sort, and might even go out of your way to avoid making constructive comment to others or letting them offer comment (positive or negative) to you. You are likely at times to adopt a silent approach or become evasive when asked to provide or take feedback. A low scorer is likely to adopt a "closed" communication style in which he or she offers little or no constructive feedback to others, and generally does expect others to provide feedback. Conversations will tend to be somewhat "mechanical" and exchange-orientated, with neither party gaining the benefit of useful guiding or coaching communication.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are a frequent giver and receiver of feedback, and you see it as a positive way to improve communication and knowledge (for yourself and others). You are more adept at giving feedback to others and in inviting others to give feedback to you (and acting on the valuable advice you receive). An individual whose scores here are high is likely to quickly establish as much conversational rapport as possible with the other person. This is usually done by suggesting that he or she is open to receiving and giving constructive feedback as a means of building strong relationships, as well as engaging in deeper or more genuinely worthwhile discussions with people.







This section on **Feedback** looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

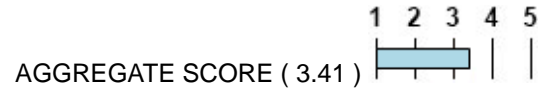
Low scorers need to accept two-way feedback as a primary means of improving the quality of communication. This means becoming less "thin-skinned" about feedback and more open to giving people honest but helpful feedback when it is appropriate.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Giving and Receiving Feedback

- Learn to see the giving and receiving of regular constructive feedback as a primary means by which learning and improvement can occur.
- Make notes on what you hear, and offer structured and specific feedback to others. Encourage other people to offer open feedback on the same basis.
- Always offer constructive feedback comments not negative or destructive remarks.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings when accepting feedback or giving it to others. Avoid destructive comments, personal attacks, and gratuitous insults.

Transmitting Your Message

This section on **Transmitting Your Message** looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: "How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?"



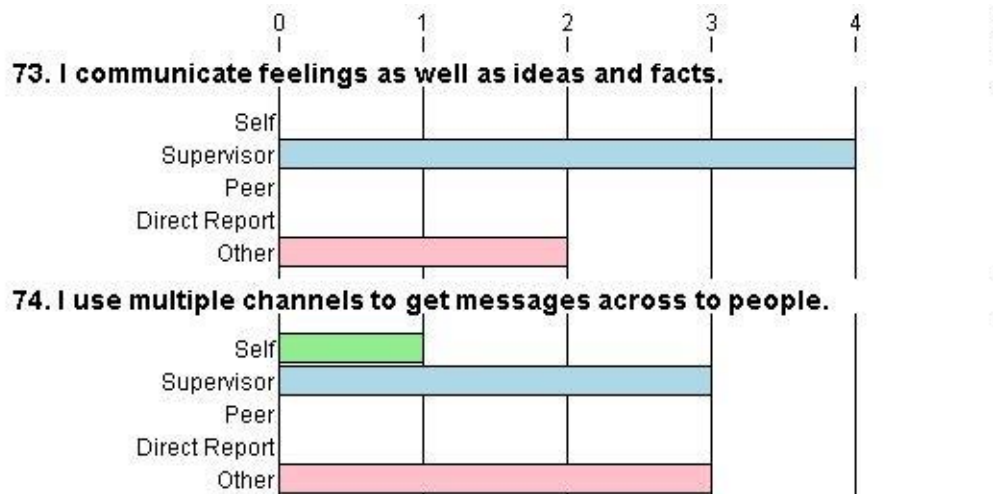
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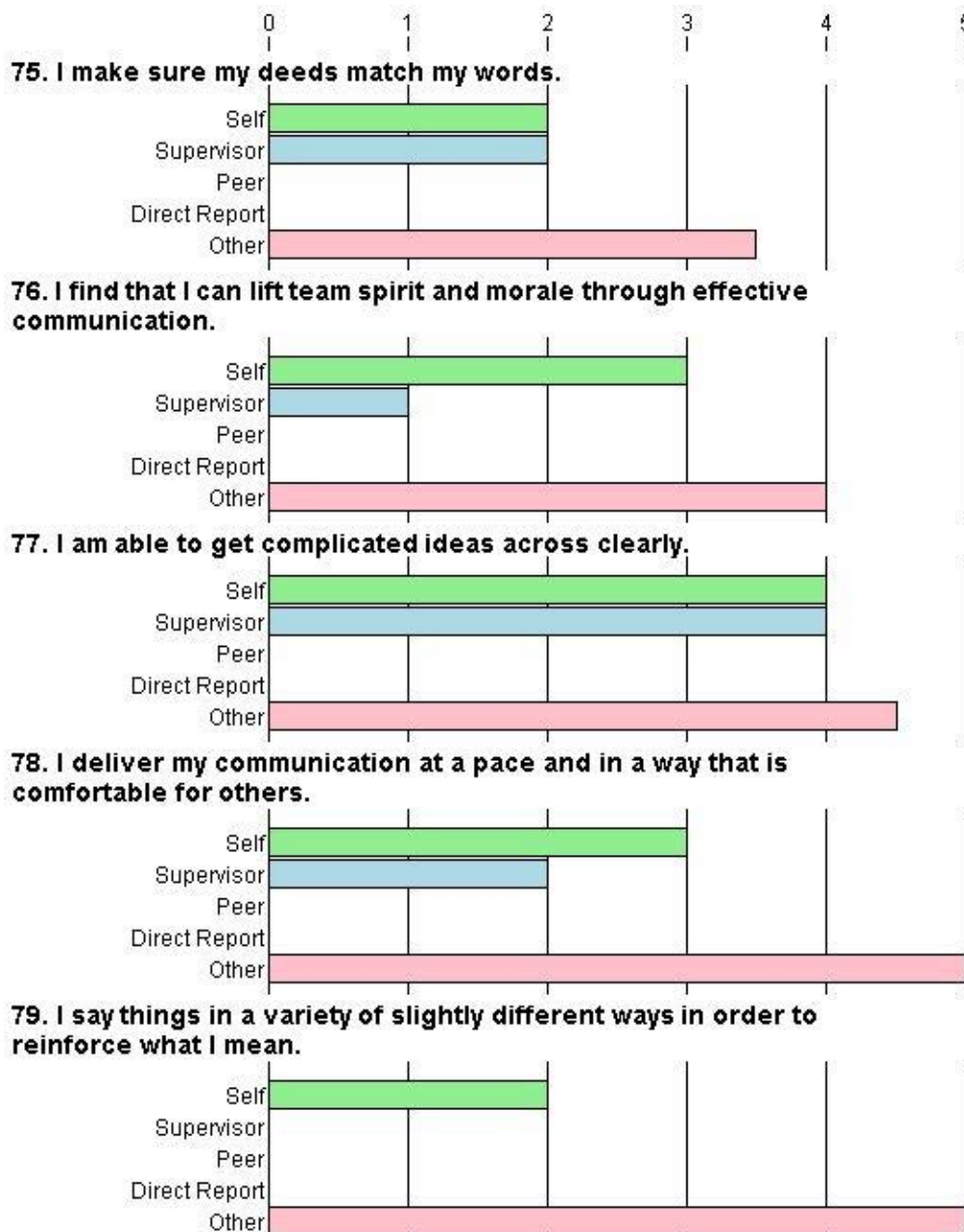
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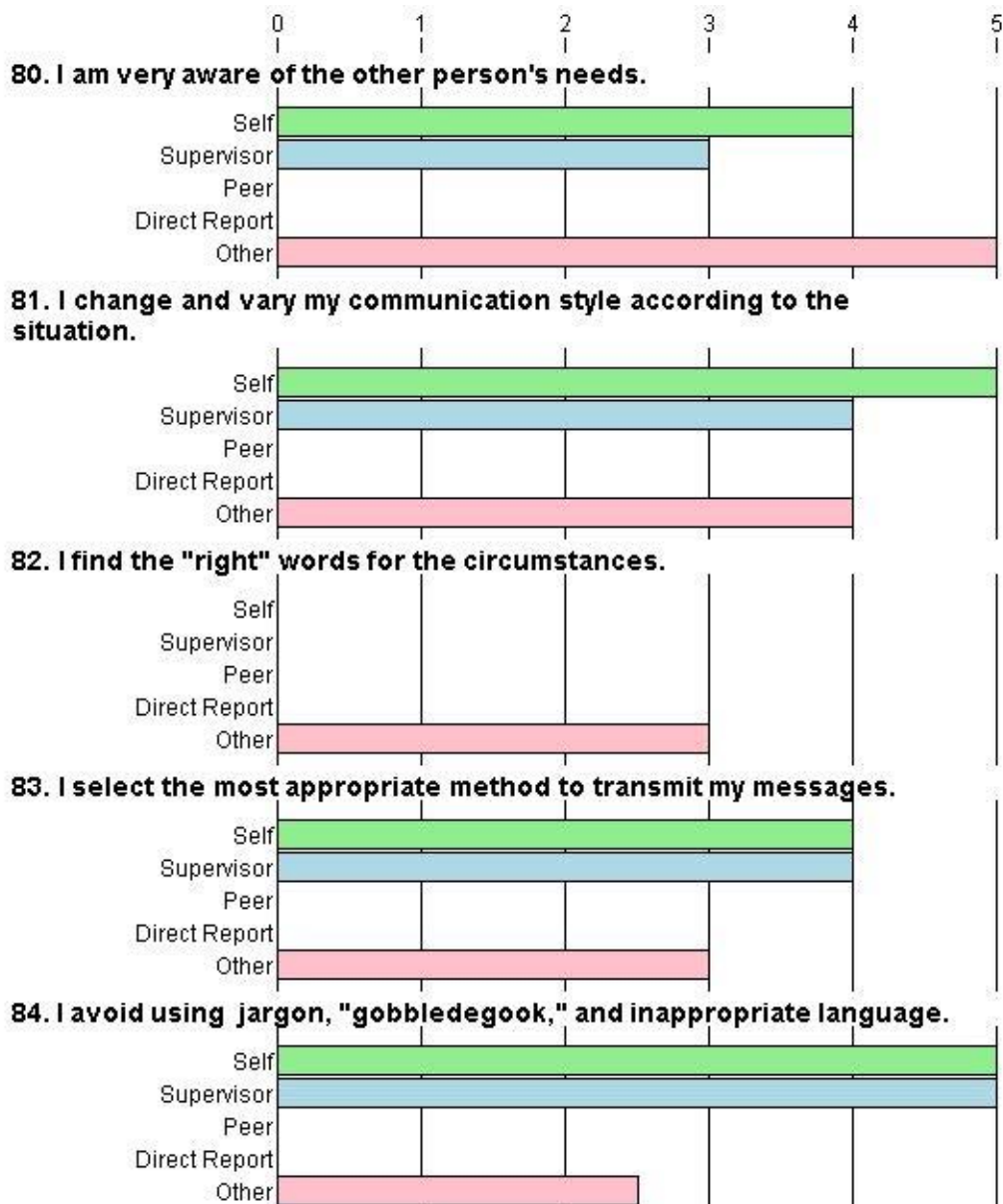
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are prone to forget the needs of different audiences to which you communicate. You also do not always select the most appropriate communication channels but instead use mainly one single communication or delivery style, regardless of the situation. For a low scorer, communication is a challenge and something to get over and done with as quickly as possible. Transmitting your message is regarded as a chore that often yields mixed results in terms of other people listening or understanding and acting appropriately on what they have heard.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you think carefully about the way you transmit your message and the communication style that you adopt in order to communicate effectively. To do this, you try hard to always be clear, concise, and consistent in what you say and do. A high scorer is usually acutely aware of the power to communicate and influence people successfully through good preparation, understanding of the audience's needs, and use of a variety of ways to communicate to ensure that every individual is given the best opportunity to understand the message.







This section on **Transmitting Your Message** looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: "How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to think more about different individual and group preferences in terms of receiving information, and should think about the impact that different channels and styles can make on the ultimate understanding of a message (and, therefore, the success of the entire communication effort).

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Transmitting Your Message

- Recognize that your actions are likely to "speak" most loudly when you are speaking with others.
- Do things to support your verbal messages to help people understand where you are coming from.
- Practice varying your personal communication approach to suit the different situations that you encounter.
- Avoid complex, jargonized, or overly technical words or phrasing to audiences that are not likely to understand or act upon your message.
- Deliver all of your messages in a slow and measured way, taking account of the particular needs of the subject and the audience.

The 10/10 Report

Top 10 Strengths

Understanding

46. I carefully follow the flow of a conversation so I can respond appropriately. 4.67

Clarifying

31. I use open questions to get people to explain their ideas. 4.67

Understanding

45. I connect what people say to me with what I already know in order to achieve a better mental understanding. 4.50

43. I correctly identify the level of someone's feelings and emotions in a conversation. 4.50

Empathizing

2. I smile warmly at people when they appear to want to talk to me. 4.50

Transmitting Your Message

81. I change and vary my communication style according to the situation. 4.33

Receiving the Message

14. I make sure that I am in the right frame of mind for all important discussions. 4.33

Empathizing

8. I engage in as much "small talk" as necessary to help people feel comfortable. 4.33

Transmitting Your Message

77. I am able to get complicated ideas across clearly. 4.25

Giving and Receiving Feedback

65. I openly demonstrate that I appreciate getting feedback from other people. 4.25

Top 10 Development Needs

Receiving the Message

20. I focus my attention on the speaker and concentrate on what is being said. 1.50

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

57. I quickly notice changes in tone or pitch. 1.67

Understanding

38. I give people time, attention, and encouragement so they can get their message across. 1.75

Clarifying

35. I am comfortable speaking up when I am confused or unsure. 2.00

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

51. I can tell when the climate for open communication is not quite right. 2.00

Empathizing

12. I encourage people to speak their minds openly and share their concerns. 2.50

Clarifying

28. I gently get the speaker to provide "missing" information as the conversation flows. 2.50

Understanding

37. I avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as mine. 2.50

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

60. I can easily tell when someone is confused about what I'm saying by observing his or her body language. 2.50

Giving and Receiving Feedback

64. I am appreciated for my direct and clear communication style. 2.50

Course and Reading Suggestions

Here is a link to a 12 page workbook that can help you further
<http://assessments24x7.com/rsb/RSBtc.pdf>

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

Reading Non-Verbal Clues looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: "How well do you assess the other person's feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?"

Course Suggestion

- Non Verbal Communication
- Reading Body Language
- Attentive Listening Skills
- Diversity and Cultural Awareness

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- How to Say It at Work: Putting Yourself Across With Power Words, Phrases, Body Language and Communication Secrets, Jack Griffin, Tom Power (Editor)
- Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction. Mark L. Knapp, and Judith A. Hall
- Body Language. David Lambert
- People-Reading : How We Control Others, How They Control Us. Dr. Ernst G. Beier, and Evans G. Valens
- Body Language. Gordon Wainwright
- Person to Person : Communicative Speaking and Listening Skills. Bycina Richards

Clarifying

Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. It asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"

Course Suggestion

- Asking Effective Questions/Successful Questioning Techniques
- Paraphrasing/Summarizing Skills
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Influencing Others

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- Fire Up Your Communication Skills : Get People to Listen, Understand, and Give You What You Want! Bob Smith
- Making Things Clear : A Guide to Effective Written and Oral Communication, W. Stanton
- The Map to Clear Messages : Conversations With a Wizard and a Warrior, Nadine Udall Fischer, et al
- Consider the Issues: Advanced Listening and Critical Thinking Skills: Carol Numrich
- Consider the Issues: Intermediate Listening and Critical Thinking Skills: Carol Numrich

Development Plan

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report, and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

I focus my attention on the speaker and concentrate on what is being said. Score: 1.50
Action to Take:

I quickly notice changes in tone or pitch. Score: 1.67
Action to Take:

I give people time, attention, and encouragement so they can get their message across. Score: 1.75
Action to Take:

I am comfortable speaking up when I am confused or unsure. Score: 2.00
Action to Take:

I can tell when the climate for open communication is not quite right. Score: 2.00
Action to Take:

RTM-8

Receiving the Message

Focus your full attention on the speaker, and concentrate on what is being said.

Distractions are all around us, but often they are the noisiest when they're in our head: the credit card bill is due, the baby's physical is coming up, you have a client waiting, etc. Despite our best intentions, it is not always easy to give our total attention to someone when they wander, are completely off the subject, or they want to talk at the most inconvenient moments (when the pressure is on to concentrate on other things). Nevertheless, we do need to focus our attention on others when they are speaking, and that's not easy. Here's how to make it a bit easier:

- 1.** Stop what you are doing and put it to one side if you can. (Not if it involves someone's safety or an equally high-priority outcome, however.) If urgent and important things do have to be attended to in the short term, the would-be speaker will just have to wait.
- 2.** Try to free your mind from what you are currently doing, and switch your attention to the needs and preoccupations of the other person. Mark your place in the document you were reading or write yourself a reminder note. Don't do a song-and-dance about having to move things around, however: Let your work environment act as a silent goad to the other person to speak economically and to the point. Just because you have shown them the courtesy of listening does not mean that they should take this as a signal to abuse your good manners by unnecessarily talking.
- 3.** Try to put preoccupations out of your mind so that you can focus all your attention on what is being said. If necessary, jot down your thoughts at this stage of your thinking and ask the person to wait. They shouldn't be offended: You are doing it so that you can give them your undivided attention. Your work should not suffer so that theirs can prosper.
- 4.** Rethink the situation. Sometimes we can get too close to our work and become blocked. A change in direction can give us new impetus or a new perspective when we return to our work. Of course, you can have too much of a good thing: If you are known as a soft touch, you might find yourself getting interrupted all day long, and none of your own work will get done.
- 5.** Don't be a soft touch. Give people your ear, but respond in an assertive way. Don't let them believe that you in fact agree with everything that they have been saying just because you were courteous enough not to interrupt.

RNC-9

“Reading” Non-Verbal Clues

Be alert for word emphasis and any changes in tone.

Much of our non-verbal communication has to do with aspects of behavior such as eye contact, gesture, and posture, but word emphasis and voice tone are also important. Good communicators pay attention to these two things because they can reveal or suggest an entire range of behavioral states. Here are some thoughts on what to look for:

1. Pay attention to which words or expressions are emphasized. “Do you really want to do that?” can be spoken in a number of ways if emphasis is placed on a different word each time. In writing, the sentence will always look the same (unless, say, the emphasized word is set off in italics). There is, obviously, much more variation in meaning when the sentence is spoken.

2. Inflection can also tell us a lot about any subtle messages communicated over and above the message inherent in the words. We normally raise our pitch only at the end of a question: “Is anyone *home*?” to cue a response from others, but people who are insecure or stressed tend to upwardly inflect at the ends of sentences that aren’t questions, and even upwardly inflect several times within the one sentence, question or not. Finality or definitiveness is indicated by downward inflection at the end of a sentence: “You’re not going, and that’s *final*.” People in positions of greater power tend to use downward inflection to demonstrate authority or dominance, while people in positions of lesser power use upward inflections to demonstrate submission. Be mindful of this: Many people have adopted the use of upward inflection for general communication, and it always comes across as tentative and insecure. Inflection can also convey the subtle aggression and critique of sarcasm: “She said she wanted to speak to you *personally*.”

3. Sometimes it is not the presence of emphasis or inflection that is critical, but their absence (in this case, the voice becomes a monotone). Monotonous delivery can mean a number of things: The speaker is bored, boring, depressed, tired, apathetic, or demotivated; is deliberately trying to discourage the interest of others; or dislikes what s/he has to speak about and does not want to display any type of positive regard for it.

4. We generally change our tone according to whom we are speaking to. When you answer the phone at work and the person on the other end turns out to be a close friend with whom you share many jokes, or a close friend with whom you are romantically involved, your tone will change from “Good morning. This is ... speaking,” to “Oh, *hi*! How *are* you?” The formal diction you use for business will change to something more informal; there will also be differences between diction used with the romantic friend and what you use with your joking friend. If the romantic friend and/or the joking friend called you up and you didn’t change your tone after your initial greeting, they would likely wonder if their relationship with you was undergoing a change. When interacting with others in the workplace, be aware of the degrees of warmth or coldness and formality or informality in your voice.

U-2

Understanding

Give people time, attention, and encouragement to get their message across.

All any of us wants is a fair hearing, and we will get that if we are given time and support so that we can communicate what we think and feel. Here are some ways we can help one another:

1. Slow down. Don't be terrorized by deadlines or pressure. Deadlines and pressure have their uses, but they are not terribly conducive to thoroughness and systematic reflection, analysis, and planning. Then extend the same courtesy to others: Some people take a little longer to express themselves.

2. Don't stampede people or subtly pressure them to keep quiet by saying things like:

- "Everyone's okay on this, right? It's pretty straightforward."
- "No one wants to alter this, right?"
- "Does anyone want to make waves on this, or can I just send it off now and get it over with?"

These things are often said brusquely and rudely to force agreement. Don't do it, and call attention to those who do. There are good reasons why "input" should never be circumvented.

3. Be careful of the non-verbal signals you send out to people. You will do more damage than good if you say you are interested in people's views but your body suggests otherwise. Here are some tips:

- Do not sit in a tense position.
- Do not move your hands, arms, and legs in an agitated, impatient fashion.
- Do not look at a watch or clock.
- Do not shake your head or sigh.
- Make eye contact.

4. Watch for non-verbal signals from others indicating that they might have something to contribute. Such signals include:

- Head-scratching
- Jotting down notes or comments
- Strong nodding or shaking of the head
- Leaning forward

- Raising a hand or finger, as if to get attention
 - Alert gaze
 - Expression of strong emotions; obvious concentration on what the speaker is saying
- 5.** Try to shield people from becoming pressured. Create opportunities for them to speak out, and defend them from interruptions, put-downs, and distractions created by others.

C-11

Clarifying

Speak up when you are confused or unsure.

There is always a moment in a wedding ceremony when people are asked to affirm that the marriage should take place: “Speak now, or forever hold your peace.” Similar dynamics apply to a whole range of human situations, including conversations and other human transactions and negotiations. Most of us are reluctant to speak up when we know we should. That’s not a good thing: We might have to continue our silence in circumstances that we regret and, in fact, might increasingly regret as time goes on. Here are a few thoughts on speaking up when you are confused or unsure:

1. Silence suggests consent. If you keep your mouth shut, the world believes that you agree with what is being said, and holds you responsible for anything that happens as a consequence of what is being said. Are you happy with that situation? Philosophers have written much about the responsibility we carry for the repercussions of remaining silent.
2. Don’t feel embarrassed by speaking out. If you are confused or unsure, then it is almost a certainty that others feel the same way. Speak up, and almost certainly others will thank you for it. Don’t let someone else do it, and don’t be trapped into the cliché situation of letting someone else do it and then saying “I was going to ask that question.”
3. Refuse to be bamboozled by bad communicators—people who do any of these things:
 - Use impenetrable jargon
 - Confuse cause and effect in their explanation of something
 - Presume that everyone else shares their narrow or particular world view
 - Leave out large sections of background material and context
 - Speak to an in-group and then take pleasure in patronizing those in the out-groupSuch people withhold critical information from others because of their incompetence. Don’t put up with it.
4. When people talk, they sometimes gloss over critical areas, or only touch upon critical factors before zooming off on a tangent. Patiently but firmly take them back to these areas, and ask for a full explanation. To prevent being duped or confused, take notes as the person is talking and highlight those points that need further amplification.
5. Be an assertive person—not a yes-person. If courage won’t motivate you, then perhaps fear will: the embarrassment you feel because you must ask for clarification will be nothing compared to the embarrassment you will feel when others ask you to explain or act on things you claim you understand, but don’t.

RNC-3

“Reading” Non-Verbal Clues

Be alert for clues that suggest that the climate for open communication is not quite right.

The best possible opportunity for people to share thoughts and feelings, solve problems, and discover truths is when communication is open, when both parties feel comfortable sharing, and when they are focused on this communication opportunity. The time is not always right for open communication, but the sensitive communicator will be adept at determining this. There will be clues. Here are some of them:

1. If the other person is preoccupied, the time will not be right for open communication. Preoccupied people do several things:

- They look at you only part of the time. The rest of the time they look at others, their work, the clock, the door, and so on.
- They impatiently drum their fingers, jiggle their legs, tap their toes, etc.
- They do other things while talking to you.
- They seize on any distraction, such as answering phones that do not need answering.

2. If the other person is tense, it's no time for open communication. Tense people do several things:

- They stare slightly (a fight-or-flight stress response).
- They lick their lips (another fight-or-flight stress response).
- They move in an agitated fashion, even when seated.
- They have hyper-alert posture (sit on the edge of their seat, etc.).

3. If the other person is mistrustful, the time is not right for open communication. Mistrustful people tend to:

- Have slightly narrowed eyes
- Turn their heads slightly away or up, to appraise you at an angle
- Use their hands in appraising gestures, such as rubbing the mouth or chin
- Point with their hands and fingers at you when making a point
- Speak in a guarded, humorless voice
- Cross their arms on their chest

4. If the other person is angry, it is not a good time for open communication. Angry people leave a few clues:

- They tend to have strong color in their face (their blood is up).
- They speak in a loud voice.
- They invade your personal body space.
- They point and jab at you, perhaps touching your body.

In some instances, the truth will only emerge when someone is angry. Of course, when a person is angry, there is a good chance that they will make the best speech they'll ever regret!

5. If the other person is not feeling well, it is not a good time for open communication. Unwell people leave clues:

- They have unusual facial coloring.
- They lick their lips and swallow frequently.
- They slump or appear to be super-tense.