

Connecting Across All Differences



- **Family Driven**
- **Non-Profit 501(c)3**

Family Driven: What makes FND unique is that the majority of our Board of Directors, all of our Management Staff and all of our Program Staff are parents or family members of persons with disabilities. When family members call FND, they not only receive the expertise and knowledge of a professional, but also the compassion and empathy of someone who has walked (and continues to walk) in their shoes.

We do NOT:

Act As Attorneys

We DO:

- ♥ Provide Support
- ♥ Provide Information
- ♥ Help Identify Options

Act as Attorneys: We don't represent families, and we don't give legal advice.

Support: FND has been the statewide Parent to Parent since 1985, and the value of families getting support by networking with other families is built into everything we do. We often get calls from parents or other family members who just need to talk – and we're there to listen.

Information: Altogether, FND logs over 15,000 calls a year, most of them from parents, family members, or professionals who are looking for information. We have a large database of resources in Florida, and a library filled with disability-related information. Regardless of the question, our staff will go the extra mile to find an answer.

Identify Options: Our philosophy at FND is that it is not our role to tell families what to do. It is our role, however, to inform families of what their options are – and encourage them to make their own decisions about what is right for their family.

**“First seek to understand, then
to be understood.”**
- Stephen Covey

The foundation to all good communication can be summed up in this one quote.

“First seek to understand, then to be understood.”

Dr. Covey is the author of several books, including the international best-seller, 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,'

Communication

Approximately 10% of communication is the words spoken,
30% is the tone of voice,
and 60% is the body language.

**“Puh-LEASE be quiet!!
I’m ON the phone!!!”**

According to Stephen Covey, communication is not just about what you say...

... it’s also about how you say it. But even those two parts of communication only add up to 40 percent. The largest part of communication is...

Body language. SIXTY percent! So much of what people PERCEIVE what you are saying is due to your body language!

Communication

Every action
even *silence*
is a communication



For example, we KNOW what this man is saying, without hearing him say a word.

For effective communication...

LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS YOU TALK

We are taught all our lives, that communication is 50-50, first you talk, then I talk, then you talk, and then it's my turn. And while you're talking, I'm thinking of what I'm going to say next, and while I'm talking, you're thinking of what you're going to say next.

Thinking, not listening.

Communication is not just about talking, it's about really paying attention to what the other person is saying. That kind of focusing in on the conversation is called ACTIVE listening.

Elements of Active Listening

- Be attentive
- Be nonjudgmental
- Paraphrase (but don't overdo it!)
- Be aware of body language

As you see here, the very first element of active listening is to be attentive. People are not actively listening when they jump to conclusions about what the other person really means, or maybe become judgmental because they do not agree with what the person is saying. If you find yourself “shutting down,” try to keep listening – and be certain that you have not misunderstood.

One way of making sure you understand what the person means is to repeat it back to them in your own words, or paraphrase. Just be careful not to overdo it – after a while, “What I hear you saying” may become annoying.

Be aware – not just of their body language, but also your own. Pay attention to your posture and facial expressions; turn toward the person and make eye contact (in certain cultures, eye contact is considered rude, so look first to see if the other person does).



**The opposite
of Active
Listening is
Passive
Listening.**

Following are a few cartoons to illustrate when people are NOT actively listening...



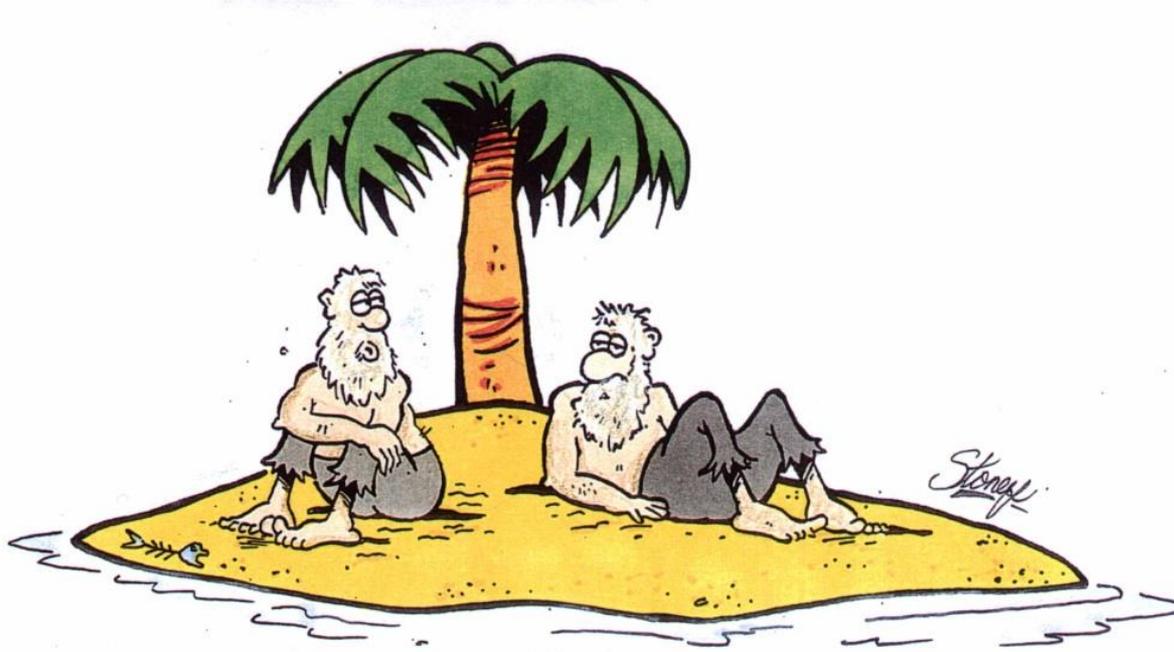
"You can stop saying 'uh-huh'! I stopped talking to you an hour ago!"

Following are a few cartoons to illustrate when people are NOT actively listening...



"Sometimes, Fred, I don't think
you listen to a word I say."

Following are a few cartoons to illustrate when people are NOT actively listening...



"I'M SORRY, WERE YOU TALKING
TO ME?"

Following are a few cartoons to illustrate when people are NOT actively listening...

Collaborative Communication

Values and Respects:

Opinions

Perspectives

Rights of Both Parties

Opinions & Perspectives – Just like the saying, “Two heads are better than one,” multiple perspectives help in problem-solving and brainstorming options
Rights of Both Parties – Goes back to respect – and general courtesy... not just legal rights, but the right to speak without interruption, the right to disagree, and the right to ask questions.

Collaborative Communication

Encourages both parties to . . .

- Express honest feelings
- Promote mutual respect
- Allow both discussion and disagreement
- Respect cultural differences
- Remain focused on the topic at hand

When people are not giving open and honest input, others are left to draw their own conclusions – which may be far from the truth, and can result in unnecessary conflict. Mutual respect occurs when everyone at the table acknowledges that each and every person has critical information to share.

When individuals feel respected and valued, discussion and even disagreement become possible without unresolved conflict.

When parents and educators communicate collaboratively, they can develop a partnership that is focused on what is best for the child.

Partnership:

A relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal.

As parents and educators, our goal is the same: to help children to have successful outcomes.

The best outcomes occur when parents and educators can truly be partners in achieving that goal.

Barriers to Communication

1. Negative History
2. Health
3. Emotional Responses
4. Jargon and Alphabet Soup
5. Fear or Intimidation

Negative History – can include your own experiences, or things you’ve been told by other people.

Health – if a person is not feeling well, it will have an effect on their communication.

Emotional Responses – Often, because you’re trying to identify what the child needs, there is much discussion about what the child cannot do – hearing these negative statements can be difficult for the child’s parents.

Jargon and Alphabet soup – Both the education and disability worlds are filled with acronyms and words that may be unfamiliar.

Fear or Intimidation – It’s common for parents to feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of professionals sitting at the table with them.

Differences of Opinion

Use **LUCK**:

Listen to and restate the other person's opinion.

Use a respectful tone.

Compromise or change your opinion if necessary.

Know and state the reasons for your opinions.

Listen carefully to what the other person is saying. Repeat back to them, in your own words what you think they are saying, to be certain you understand. It's okay to disagree with another person, but remember to use a respectful tone.

Sometimes what the other person says will change your mind about an issue. It's alright to compromise or change your opinion if necessary.

Know and state the reasons for your opinions.

These steps are a useful tool when the group is facing a situation where there is disagreement. When these steps are followed, open communication can result in new ideas that everyone agrees with.

**Coming together is
a beginning;**

**working together for
a common goal
is progress;**

**good collaborative
communication
is a success!**

Introducing: FND University

- **Absolutely free!**
- **Available 24 hours**
- **Interactive online distance learning system**
- **Trainings at your home at your convenience**
- **Transcript of all courses**
- **Certificates of completion**

Website: <http://fnduniversity.org>

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