



**CONNECTED
BUSINESS**

7 STEPS TO MINDFULNESS AND COMPASSION @WORK

MANUAL
Step 5: Communication

7 Steps to Mindfulness and Compassion @Work

Step 5: Authentic Communication

Today we will explore step 5 from our 7-step program: Authentic Communication. This step is all about finding your own voice and learning how to communicate effectively.

Before we dive deeper into the content we invite to a short arriving practice....

Mindfulness practice

Arriving, connection with the present moment and the body: add any observation of what came up for you during the exercise. What is important for you today?

How to find your own voice and learn to communicate effectively?

One of the big benefits of a mindful life is to become more and more authentic. This means for us being aware of yourself and how you are showing up. A necessary skill is starting to communicate your authentic truth - this is the way how you connect to who you are and what you want to say.

At the same time communication it is key to work with others, solving conflicts or building bridges between people. It's key how the world perceives you.

A first step that we share with people on the way to learn authentic communication is to

listen skillfully. Very often, projects fail because of non-existing or failed communication.

So let's do one step back: What is communication and how does it work?

We all have a certain conditioning. It is different for each one of us and it influences the way we speak and perceive the world, the way we receive what we hear and what triggers us.

Pain we have experienced has also a big influence. We all went through good stuff and bad stuff and some of them left traces of pain or shame in us - even if we think they have passed long ago they can still influence us.

The same thing happens with beliefs that we took over in early childhood, first from our parents, then from our surroundings and environment we grew up in. There are so many areas where our beliefs are created and they constantly work in us. Internet, politics, media, work, and self-development journeys to name a few.

All these things influence the perception of ourselves and how we communicate in ourselves and the world. They influence the way we react to things people say to us or what we see in them or project on them.

Another complexity in communication is that what someone says and what and how a listener perceives the message can be totally different. The listener is influenced by his/her own conditioning, the relationship and history to the person who speaks.

So you see and maybe you know already - communication is really complex.

We want you to go one step further and come out of your communication autopilot and also find a way how you can even communicate difficult things in a way that feels honest and authentic to you. Therefore we want to introduce you to three practices that help us a lot in our work:

Exercise: Mindful listening

Mindful listening is all about letting someone else share his/her story without interrupting and at the same time giving all our attention to the person that is sharing.

You define a person A and a person B. Person A starts to speak and person B listens without saying anything in return - use a timer to know when the time is over and switch roles – this time Person B talks and person A provides the full gift of listening.

The topic you can speak about is an important topic you wanted to share with the person. If you first want to practice it in an easy way, you can use one of these examples:

What inspires me most is....

I am grateful for...

Something I always dreamed about is...

Find a friend, colleague, or family member, explain the exercise to them and practice mindful listening.

Conflict Communication

When we talk about conflict we mean that moment when you are triggered by somebody else and normally you would react and start trying to solve or change the situation.

Step 1: Awareness

Become aware of what is going on for you in this situation. Take a deep breath. - become aware: “wow, this is triggering me right now. I can observe many strong emotions.”

Step 2: Containing

After becoming aware it is useful to just feel all that is present for you - this is what we call Containing. It is the capacity to feel the shame, anger, frustration, helplessness, neediness, or any kind of emotion that got triggered and maintain it for yourself. This doesn't mean you suppress it. It is much more an invitation to go deeper. Taking this possibility to look into your emotions: where does it come from? Why do you maybe create this kind of situation again and again? Where does the pain come from and where does it guide you? Observe sensations in your body - they usually give us great guidance to understand our emotions better. Stay in an observing mode like a scientist with a lot of curiosity

Step 3: Respond instead of reacting

After containing the situation and becoming aware of your true needs you can come back to the person and respond accordingly instead of reacting. To continue the conversation which triggered you, you have now to prepare the ground that makes true communication possible. Therefore ask your counterpart and ask him or her for the right moment and place to come back to the conversation. So that your counterpart can be prepared and not surprisingly overwhelmed by your sharing.

Step 4: Sharing

Now it is time to share. Therefore stay with your facts and feelings. Share what has happened for YOU - facts and no analyzing, don't blame, don't talk about the other person, share from your vulnerability and true self. Share your trigger point starting with: "When I heard you say... I felt..." Recognize how you contributed to the situation and talk about your feelings, pains, and needs.

Step 5: Take Responsibility

And now you can take your responsibility. Take the consequences whatever they mean to you. Stay connected to the other person and stand up for yourself.

Truth-speaking

Speak from your heart, saying out loud all there is present for you in this moment in a way that does not blame someone else but that is still super honest, in a voice that is grounded and just with the intention to share not to blame or make anyone look stupid. It is super healing to do this without holding back anything – and like all communication, it takes time and practice. Start practicing it with small things in your life first or ask a friend if he/she wants to do this on a regular basis.

Mindfulness Practice: Ground yourself before communicating

Connect to yourself, get grounded through your feet, feel into your heart, belly, and throat. Ask yourself what is true for you. How do you want to show up, how do you want to speak? What kind of words do you want to use? How does your voice sound?

It is not easy....

We want to be honest with you: this communication stuff is really a challenge, even for us after practicing it for so many years. Every time we get triggered it is still a huge challenge to come back, to reconnect with ourselves and continue an authentic communication in an authentic way, how we can respect our own needs and the needs of the other. It is not easy and we can see that we grow in that path and that we can become better step by step. Sometimes we react, sometimes we do not react, sometimes we can come back in that moment and reconnect to ourselves, sometimes we have to step out of the situation and be angry. So please take this as an invitation to make it step by step and find your own way to speak your own truth.

And anger and expressing anger is also something good - it does not mean you can't be angry anymore and can't say this to another person anymore - sometimes it's actually exactly what you need to do. Truth-speaking is "I am really angry right now and what I want to do is just blame it on to you but I know there is something else in it.

We invite you to join us on this journey of finding your own voice and speaking the truth in a way that creates a connection.

Homework Exercise

- *Do one communication exercise: mindful listening, truth-speaking or conflict communication exercise with a colleague or close friend. Explain the exercise before you start.*
- *Use the meditation that we just did to ground yourself before that*
- *Find 10 minutes twice this week to do a meditation – you can use either the attached one or any of your choice*

Thanks for sharing your time with us and we look forward to our next session.

