

Keep Your Cool with this Tool

COMMUNICATING WELL IS THE KEY TO KEEPING CALM

Trying to express your thoughts and needs to somebody who just doesn't get it can be very frustrating. You may suppress your feelings or blow a gasket, neither of which is good for your mental state or physical health. With some effective skills to handle your emotions, you can resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create a positive environment that breeds creativity, productivity and success.

Effective communication is a combination of skills that includes listening, recognizing nonverbal signals, managing stress in the moment, and staying connected to your emotions.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Listening is vital to effective communication. It's not just hearing the words, but understanding what the other person means and how he or she feels.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

- Put away your cellphone, close your folders, and don't doodle. Focus on hearing what is being said.
- Don't interrupt or redirect the conversation to your concerns.
- Don't appear judgmental, critical, or accusatory.
- Show your interest in what is being said. Nod, smile, and make sure your posture is inviting.

WATCH YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

- Don't roll your eyes, squirm in your seat, or contort your face to show that you are annoyed.
- Don't say yes while shaking your head no.
- Keep your arms uncrossed and maintain eye contact.

KEEP STRESS IN CHECK

Stress in small doses may help you under pressure. But too much can cloud your ability to speak clearly, listen effectively, or read non-verbal skills properly. Reacting can cause you to say or do things you'll regret.

Action Step
The next time you are in a stressful situation, take control. Think before you speak. Take a few deep breaths. Look for humor to break up the tension. Be willing to compromise or at least agree to disagree.

