STRAIGHT TALK® CHECKLIST:

39 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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10 Tips to Improve Your Communication Skills:

☐ I acknowledge how effective communication builds trust.

☐ I acknowledge that effective communication is the most important thing that humans do.

☐ I acknowledge the need to get out of my "comfort zone" in order to communicate well.

☐ I regularly acknowledge my inability to see things clearly. I regularly ask for help in understanding a problem or an issue.

☐ I listen actively to what people say – and don't say – in order to understand the essence of what is being said.

☐ I am aware of the [four types of intent](). I use an "affirming" mode of intent as much as possible.

☐ I aim to see all sides before trying to resolve a problem.

☐ I assume good intentions on the part of other people until the data proves otherwise. I check my emotional assumptions.

☐ I regularly acknowledge [my role as a source of conflict](). I readily acknowledge the conflicts I co-create.

☐ I balance personal disclosures about what I think and feel with inquiries into whether I am seeing the situation clearly.

6 Tips to Focus on Communication Styles:

☐ I regularly stretch my style of communicating. I push myself to move to the center of the [Matrix]().

☐ I practice [identifying]() the styles of other people. I practice tuning my style to those of other people.

☐ I remind myself about the way in which my style affects other people. I ask people: "What assumptions are other people regularly making of me? How can I counter them?"

☐ When communicating criticism, [I adopt the language and style of the other person](). I use an affirming intent.

☐ I check to make sure I base criticism on data, not assumptions. I ask for feedback on how the other person sees the situation.

☐ I am aware of [how my style affects my decision making]().

6 Tips to Focus on Assumptions:

☐ I consciously discriminate between assumptions and facts. I help people diagnose assumptions with the [Circle of Assumptions]().

☐ I balance inquiry and advocacy. I ask questions and probe the data, or lack of data, before drawing conclusions.

☐ I regularly check my frame of reference. I ask: What assumptions am I making? About events? About other people? About myself?

☐ I check my [assumption of competence](). I acknowledge my responsibility for things that go wrong. I strive to be humble.

☐ I help people identify the missing data.

☐ I regularly hold meetings where I start by discussing what new facts I've learned.

6 Tips to Focus on Conflict Resolution:

☐ I deal immediately with conflicts and sensitive topics. I acknowledge the "elephants" in the room.

☐ I am aware of my [Inner Scripts](). I listen to what I'm afraid to disclose.

☐ I force myself to express my Inner Scripts productively. I communicate them in the form of a dilemma. I frame them positively. I am specific in communicating the pain I experience and how it affects me.

☐ I communicate my Inner Scripts directly. I don't triangulate. I talk to Jane about problems with Jane. I don't talk to Dick until you've talked to Jane, and only talk to Dick if he must know.

☐ When competing groups are in conflict, I get each side to lay out their argument(s) clearly. I capture the arguments on paper. Then, I get the entire group to identify the assumptions each side is making and the missing data. I build agreements by having people agree on what additional information is needed to clarify or resolve assumptions.

11 Tips to Focus on Meeting Management:

☐ I communicate the meeting's purpose.

☐ I clarify decision-making roles.

☐ I match the decision-making to the meeting's purpose.

☐ I provide an agenda.

☐ I manage my time.

☐ I adopt [protocols for meetings](agendas, advance materials, minutes, timekeepers, facilitators, etc.)

☐ I invite dissent. I point a pot stirrer for each meeting.

☐ I avoid impromptu meetings. I make sure everyone who needs to be present is present.

☐ I keep the meeting focused. When it strays, I immediately bring it back to focus.

☐ I push every meeting toward action. I record what actions were taken, not taken, and those that still need to be taken.

☐ I focus the final 10 minutes of every meeting on communicating the results of the meeting. I distribute a copy of the minutes to everyone who is affected.

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