



# THE SEVEN SECRETS OF GREAT COMMUNICATION

Good communication can make a huge difference to your experience of life, at home and at sea.

If you can communicate well, you can help others to really understand you – whether you're sharing your opinions or concerns, explaining what you want or asking for advice.

Effective communication can reduce misunderstandings, assumptions, frustrations and conflict with others, helping to improve your work and personal relationships.

Here are seven tips to becoming a better communicator:

## 1. Active listening

Avoid distractions when someone is talking to you - and remember that culture, language, beliefs, attitudes, expectations and intentions act as a filter from what is being said to what is understood. Be aware of your filters!

## 2. Explaining why you want to speak to someone and inviting consent

This will help the listener to:

- Accept or decline to take part in a specific conversation
- Understand the context (big picture)
- Get ready for what is coming, especially if the topic is emotionally charged
- Understand the role you would like them to play in the conversation

## 3. Asking the right questions

Assess which types of questions are right for the conversation you are having:

CLOSED QUESTIONS	OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS
Give <b>facts</b>	Encourage <b>large and more elaborate</b> explanations
<b>Easy</b> to answer	Allow the responder to <b>think and reflect</b>
<b>Quick</b> to answer	Give room to express <b>opinions and feelings</b>
Give the <b>questioner</b> control over the conversation	Hand control of the conversation to the <b>respondent</b>

## 4. Expressing yourself clearly and completely

Use "I statements" to help your conversation partner understand what you are thinking, feeling and wanting. For example:

- When I saw/heard...
- I felt
- Because I... (need, want, interpret, associate, etc)
- And now I want (then I wanted)...
- So that (in order to)...

## 5. Having an attitude of gratitude

To build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude.

## 6. Adopting a learning perspective

Be more aware of the benefits of good conversations and how they help to express and create our character as we listen and speak. They help us to become more aware, competent, wise, honest, sincere, genuine, caring, compassionate, accepting and forgiving.

## 7. Translating criticism and complaints into a request for change

Help your listeners respond to your request by clearly explaining what you want. Also, when you are receiving criticism and complaints from others, try to understand what they are asking you to change and repeat this back to them so that there is no confusion.