

## **7 Habits of Highly Successful Communicators**

by JoJo Tabares

Eighty-seven percent of what we do all day long is communication related. It was such an important skill, that the Lord saw fit to include the topic in His Word many times over. Successful communicators make successful people because it touches almost every single aspect of our lives from personal to professional. Here are seven things that all successful communicators have in common. You can too!

### **1. Successful communicators know the significance of the First Rule of Communication:**

Rule #1: It is the speaker's job to be understood and not the listener's job to understand. If you understand this very important principle, it will help you avoid much misunderstanding and frustration. Many people mistakenly assume that, once they say something, it is the listener's job to figure out what they meant. When the listener does not, they say things like, "I just told you!" or they repeat the same statement (perhaps louder, as if the listener were hard of hearing, or slower, as if the listener were a few brain cells shy). If you understand that it is your job to get your message across, you will take more care to put things clearly. You will be much more forgiving if someone doesn't understand you the first time. Or you will find some other way to say it, ensuring the other person will better understand .

### **2. Successful communicators build large vocabularies:**

There is a reason your teachers and parents were so concerned that you learn your vocabulary words! The bigger your vocabulary, the more ammunition you have in your arsenal with which to make yourself understood. Someone with a large vocabulary can choose to speak plainly for clarity or to speak with technically accurate terminology to relate to those who are more knowledgeable in that field. So kids, take your mom's advice and study those words!!

### **3. Successful communicators know their audience:**

Effective communicators express themselves well because they have learned to speak to their unique audience (whether it be one or a crowd). One size does NOT fit all! That applies just as much to communication as it does to clothing. As a woman of 5' and no inches with a very tiny waist and not-so-tiny hips and thighs, I can tell you that not all clothes fit me either! My body is unique and so is the way I look at the world. However, I am not unique in my uniqueness! God created each one of us special. No two people see things exactly the same way. Why do you think police officers will tell you that they can have 10 witnesses to a crime and come up with 11 different stories! The more you know about your listener(s), the more you will be able to relate to them. Some things you will be able to determine by observing their behavior, and some things you may need to ask them. Nobody likes being treated as "one of the crowd." Speak to people as if they are precious and unique children of God!

### **4. Successful communicators are good listeners:**

Most people think of great communicators as talkers, but in reality, they are great listeners! It isn't the guy who is always talking that you love to be around. It's the one who listens to YOU! It's the special friend who always asks how you are and really WANTS the answer! It's the sales girl who wants to sell you what you are LOOKING for and not what she has in stock. These are the great communicators! Listening is a critical skill that allows you to know your audience.

**5. Successful communicators are confident—inspiring others to listen:**

What drew people to Ronald Reagan? What was it that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had that inspired others? What was it that even Adolph Hitler had that allowed his evil to flourish for a time? It was more than just their words! It's what some call charisma. It's a confidence in themselves and what they believe (whether right or wrong!) that draws others in. It is the personality of the speaker that comes through the message—showing his conviction. These are the people who inspire.

**6. Successful communicators back up their claims with facts and not opinion:**

Asserting a position does not make it so. In order to convince others, especially those who hold another belief, you need more than just your say so! You need a little thing many politicians today forget to include in their communication: FACTS! Opinions are not very convincing even when they belong to someone who is an expert in that field! Back up your statements with "just the facts, Ma'am!" No matter how persuasive your argument may sound, it will never convince that segment of people who start out thinking you are wrong, unless you have something to support your claim beyond "because I say so!" It didn't work for your mother. What makes you think it will work for you?

**7. Successful communicators understand that credibility is vital:**

What constitutes a fact? According to Webster's Dictionary, a fact is a piece of information presented as having objective reality/truth. When successful communicators speak, they present facts that their audience will see as having credibility. Trying to prove abortion rights by quoting Planned Parenthood will not sway anyone who is pro-life. They are not objective and therefore, hold no credibility with them. By the same token, trying to prove a pro-life stance to those who are not Christians will not work by your quoting the Bible.

Highly successful people are highly successful communicators. They take responsibility for their message, build an arsenal of words, understand their audience, listen more than they speak, exude confidence, and back up their claims with credible facts. You will too, if you have a message that you want to get out!

**Biographical Information**

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*JoJo Tabares holds a degree in speech communication, but it is her humorous approach to communication skills which has made her a highly sought-after Christian speaker and*

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