

Building Trust in Relationships: Key Communication Skills Part I

**Trust – Bryk and Schneider
Self-Assessment**

**Rapport & Non-Verbals
Listening Skills
Questioning Skills**

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About the Presenter

Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and independent schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel, and others on new employee support, supervision, being generationally savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills.

In Palo Alto USD (Palo Alto, CA), Jennifer led professional development sessions on topics from equity and elements of effective instruction to teacher leadership and peer coaching and provided new teacher and administrator trainings at both the elementary and secondary level. From 2000-2011, Jennifer was lead coach for the Palo Alto-Mountain View-Los Altos-Saratoga-Los Gatos Consortium's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program.

In her educational consulting work, Jennifer has presented at annual conferences such as Learning Forward, ASCD, NASSP, NAESP, AMLE, ISACS and the New Teacher Center Annual Symposium, as well as at the Teachers' and Principals' Centers for International School Leadership. Jennifer's communications consulting in the health care sector includes training and coaching work at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and Stanford Hospital and Clinics.

Jennifer's publications include *Having Hard Conversations, The Multigenerational Workplace: Communicating, Collaborating & Creating Community* and *Hard Conversations Unpacked – the Whos, the Whens and the What Ifs* (to be published January of 2016.) She has also created a Corwin Press e-course by the same name. Other publications include "Planning Productive Talk," her article for ASCD's *Educational Leadership* (October 2011), her chapter, "Habits of Mind for the School Savvy Leader" in Art Costa's and Bena Kallick's book, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*, and her contribution to the book, *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers* published by Teachers College Press. Jennifer writes a monthly newsletter/blog, *Voice Lessons*, available for reading at and subscribing to on her website, www.jenniferabrams.com.

Jennifer has been recognized as one of "18 Women All K-12 Educators Need to Know" by *Education Week's* 'Finding Common Ground' blog. She has been a featured interviewee on the topic of professionalism for ASCD's video series, *Master Class*, hosted by National Public Radio's Claudio Sanchez, and in the lead article, "Finding Your Voice in Facilitating Productive Conversations" for Learning Forward's *The Leading Teacher*, Summer 2013 newsletter; as a generational expert for "Tune in to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do," published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, (May 2011), and by the Ontario Ministry of Education for their *Leadership Matters: Supporting Open-to-Learning Conversations* video series.

Jennifer considers herself a "voice coach," helping others learn how to best use their voices - be it collaborating on a team, presenting in front of an audience, coaching a colleague, supervising an employee. Jennifer holds a Master's degree in Education from Stanford University and a Bachelor's degree in English from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, California. Jennifer can be reached at jennifer@jenniferabrams.com, www.jenniferabrams.com, and on Twitter @jenniferabrams.

Our conversations invent us. Through our speech and our silence, we become smaller or larger selves. Through our speech and our silence, we diminish or enhance the other person, and we narrow or expand the possibilities between us. How we use our voice determines the quality of our relationships, who we are in the world, and what the world can be and might become. Clearly, a lot is at stake here.

Harriet Lerner, The Dance of Connection

Trust – Research by Bryk and Schneider

Organizations with a high degree of trust are more likely to make changes that help the group achieve. According to these researchers, there are four vital signs for identifying and assessing trust.

Respect: Do we acknowledge one another's dignity and ideas? Do we interact in a courteous way?

Competence: Do we believe in each other's ability and willingness to fulfill our responsibilities effectively?

Personal regard: Do we care about each other personally and professionally? Are we willing to go beyond our formal roles and responsibilities to go the extra mile?

Integrity: Can we trust each other to put the interests of others first, especially when tough decisions have to be made? Do we keep our word?

What are your thoughts about the degree of trust in your relationships? What do you think are some of the changes that you could personally make to increase the trust?

Key Rapport Skills For Better Conversations

Watch Your Rapport

Physical

Muscle Tension

Posture

Gesture (hands)

Eye Contact

Physical Space between you

Where you sit/stand in the room

Which room you are in

Vocal

Intonation/Pitch

(approachable vs. credible)

Pace

Word Choice

Breathing

Depth

Duration

Rate

Attend to Rapport If

You anticipate tension or anxiety

Tension or anxiety emerges

**You are having difficulty understanding the
other person**

You are distracted

**Adapted from Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships by
Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman**

Be Aware of “I” Listening

Personal Referencing – autobiographical

Personal Curiosity – gossip, etc.

Personal Certainty – solution-oriented

**Ask yourself: What are my reasons for saying this?
Does it serve for this person to hear this?**

Paraphrasing

Pause

Using wait time before responding to or asking a question allows time for more complex thinking, enhances dialogue and improves decision-making.

Paraphrase

Let's others know that you are listening, that you understand or are trying to understand them and that you care.

Inappropriate Paraphrases

- **No paraphrase**
- **Too often (too frequent)**
- **Too long**
- **Same words (parroting)**
- **Wrong pronoun (using "I" – so what "I" hear you saying is...)**

Possible paraphrasing stems...

So...

In other words....

What you're suggesting is...

You're saying...

Key Questioning Skills For Better Conversations

Pause

Leave space after you ask a question
Leave space after they finish answering
Leave space before you respond

Have an Approachable Voice

Rise at the end of a statement
Use a credible voice when you are “consulting”

Use Plural Forms

To increase thinking and not block it use plural forms.
“What are some of your goals?”
“What ideas do you have?”
“What accommodations are you considering?”

Use Tentative Language

To reduce need for absolutes/surety
“What hunches do you have?”
“What might be some of the possible solutions?”
“What may the others think of this idea?”
“How might you go about doing that?”

Use Positive Presuppositions

Presumes the other person is capable of thought and is willing to reflect.
“As you think about this with your expertise...”
“Considering you know them well...”
“As you plan, what are some of the things that are important to you?”
“As you move through the work, what are some of the indicators you will look for to see the work is progressing?”
“What do you make of...”
“What leads you to believe...?”
“What are some other ways you have thought about looking this challenge?”
“How do you see/envision this working out....?”