

YOU Deserve Better Communication Skills

The FPS Technique Offers It

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You Deserve Better Communication Skill



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BOOKS BY IGOMENE JOSEPH

- The F.P.S. Method: When Feelings, Problem, and Solution Need to be Explored Separately
- Feelings First: The How-To Guide for Emotional Healing
- Schizophrenia: When Body, Mind, and Spirit Go to War

INTRODUCTION

According to author Neale Donald Walsch, there are five natural emotions that all people feel. These are grief, anger, envy, fear, and love. He further explains that grief, anger, and envy can be considered offshoots of the two main emotions: fear and love.

Mr. Walsch explains that love and fear are the primal duality. Everything comes from these two emotions. All thoughts, concepts, ideas, choices, etc. They all come down to love or fear.

Mr. Walsch also believes that even fear can be considered an offshoot of love. Now, it may seem like these two emotions are completely opposites of each other, but he does give a really good example.

Now, imagine a parent sees their child in the street with a car coming straight for them. They rush to get the child out of the street. Now, was the parent feeling fear or love? In this case, it would be both. Fear for the child and enough love to put their own life at risk.

This is how fear, in its highest form, becomes love. The other natural emotions are also concepts of love. The problem comes when natural emotions become distorted. Here are some examples of how natural emotions can become distorted.

Grief. Children are often taught not to cry, but this can lead to said child repressing their feelings as an adult. These are the people who have a hard time crying as an adult or expressing any sort of sadness. Continually repressed grief can lead to chronic depression, a completely unnatural emotion.

Anger. Anger is often thought of as a bad emotion, when in reality, it is a tool. We can use anger to let us know that we don't like something. It is a way to say, "No, thank you." Unchecked anger turns to rage. Wars have started from rage; murders are committed due to rage.

Envy. Envy is an emotion that is natural, as it pushes us to work harder for what we want. Children who are taught that envy is wrong will not learn how to deal with their envy as adults. Repressed envy leads to jealousy. Jealousy has led to wars, murders, and nations falling.

Fear. Babies are born with two fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. All other fears are learned over time. Children who are taught that it is not okay to fear something often don't learn to manage their fear as adults. Repressed fear leads to panic. Panic leads to all sorts of bad things, including war and murder.

Love. This is an emotion that, when allowed to be felt and given, needs nothing else. Love is an emotion that is self-sufficient. However, when love becomes conditional, then the feeling warps to possessiveness.

This goes to show how natural emotions, when unchecked and repressed, lead to unnatural reactions and responses. Knowing the natural emotions are a gift, learning to harness them is a privilege.

Now that you know what the five natural emotions are, as well as their unnatural counterparts, I look forward to teaching you the FPS Technique for dealing with your emotions before they become toxic.

UNDERSTANDING THE FPS TECHNIQUE

What is the FPS Technique and I-Statements Explained

Imagine, if you will, a scenario where you are in a conflict with another person. Due to this conflict, your communication skills falter, as your emotions heighten. Now, what if I could tell you that there is a way to communicate in an effective manner, even during a conflict? I created the FPS Technique in a way to help myself and others to communicate during any problem, whether it be asking for a raise at work or an argument with a spouse.

So, what does FPS stand for? It's quite simple. Feelings + Problems = Solutions. In other words, in order to find a solution, you need to know not just what the problem is, but also how you are feeling that is connected to the problem.

Here is an example of how to use the FPS Technique. Say that you have been working for a company for two years and believe that your work quality is good enough to qualify you for

a raise. Rather than going to your boss and just saying that you would like a raise, you could use the FPS Technique. In this instance, you would explain your feelings and why you feel that you are deserving of a raise, with the solution obviously being you getting that raise.

Another thing that is important in using the FPS Technique is the use of I-Statements. Accepting responsibility for your feelings is one of the most important communication skills you can acquire. So often, we, as humans, try to blame others for our problems, rather than taking responsibility. A good rule of thumb is: If you have a problem, make an I-Statement.

It is important to be aware that personal opinions sound like facts when one uses a form of "am" or "is," such as "you are...," "I am...," "it is..." and so on. Furthermore, in addition to sounding factual, such statements imply the whole person is a certain way and will be forever. Example: "You are selfish" is a pronouncement which implies that there are no unselfish traits anywhere in the person's personality--and that the entire person will stay that way forever. This is probably untrue: it is an over-generalization. It would be much

more accurate and effective to say, "I resent it when you make plans for the entire family without asking what the rest of us want to do."

I-Statements consist of a description of how you feel, an indication of the conditions under which you feel that way, and an explanation of why those conditions cause your emotions. I-Statements take this form: "I feel... (State your emotion) when you.... (describe their behavior or under what conditions you feel this way) because... (explain why their behavior or the conditions cause you to feel this way).

Clearly, giving an I-Statement is more constructive than commanding, threatening, moralizing, judging, issuing ultimatums, mind-reading, or other behaviors that create defensiveness. However, this is not an easy concept to grasp. The pronoun "you" is used all the time, and many uses are not bad. The problem is we often state personal opinions as facts, and over-generalizations are implied by forms of the verb "to be," like "are," "is," "am," and so on.

In order to fully use I-Statements, you need to know the three parts that make them up.

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1. **Emotion: “I feel...”** (state your emotion): It is a self-disclosure, referring to "I" and it expresses a feeling.
2. **Behavior: “When you...”** (describe their behavior or under what conditions you feel this way)
3. **Why: “Because...”** (explain why those conditions or their behavior cause you to feel this way).

To learn more about the use of I-Statements, check out the FPS Workbook.

IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS

If you have ever been to therapy, you know that the most dreaded and important question is “What are you feeling?” This is not always an easy question to answer, as we rarely focus on identifying what we are feeling, despite always, and I do mean ALWAYS, feeling something.

So, how do you identify emotions? I recently came across a blog post on a Canadian therapy center’s website (Reflection Counseling, if you are interested) that states that there are four steps to identifying your emotions.

Step 1: WHAT am I feeling?

Step 2: WHERE do I feel it?

Step 3: WHY am I feeling it?

Step 4: WHAT do I need?

No, good, fine, and ok are not emotions. Sit for a moment and think about what you are feeling. Don’t judge yourself on how or why you are feeling this emotion, just let it come to you. If this does not come easily to you (I know it didn’t happen to me), you can use a feelings

list like the one on the next page to help you identify the emotion.

Now that you know what you are feeling, notice that certain emotions have physical feelings. For example, you can feel sadness in your chest or anxiety in your stomach. Now, why are you feeling this emotion? Is it from something that happened recently? Or was it triggered by a past event? Follow the breadcrumbs. What is the emotion telling you? What do you NEED? If you're lonely, maybe what you need is to call a friend or relative. Anxious? How about writing in a journal, going for a walk, or talking with a loved one?

Your emotions are telling you everything you need to know; you just need to learn to listen.

Feelings Word List

Happy

Appreciated
Cheerful
Excited
Grateful
Hopeful
Loved
Satisfied
Thankful
Uplifted

Mad

Angry
Defensive
Frustrated
Furious
Impatient
Insulted
Rebellious
Used
Violated

Sad

Alone
Depressed
Disappointed
Discouraged
Hopeless
Lonely
Miserable
Neglected
Remorseful

Scared

Afraid
Anxious
Cautious
Frightened
Lost
Helpless
Insecure
Nervous
Useless

Surprise

Astonished
Curious
Delighted
Inquisitive
Impressed
Mystified
Passionate
Shocked
Stunned

Disgust

Embarrassed
Exposed
Guilty
Ignored
Inadequate
Incompetent
Inferior
Sick
Stupid

IDENTIFYING CONFLICTS

When you think about the word “conflict,” most likely you think of it as being negative. However, that is not always the case. Think of it this way. People are individuals, and as such, we will not always agree on everything. That is a good thing!

The Random House Dictionary defines conflict as “to come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition; clash.”

Let’s cover some examples of both good and bad conflicts.

Bad Conflicts

- Two spouses arguing over finances.
- Several employees are angry with their manager over scheduling changes.
- Two coworkers are fighting for a commission.

Good Conflicts

- Six high school football teams are fighting for a championship.

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- Two companies are trying to sell the better product.
- Multiple sales teams are trying to get more sales.

While “good” conflicts are good for motivation and competition, “bad” conflicts have their place in life as well. The “bad” conflicts are where your communication methods are most important and where the FPS Technique is the most helpful tool in your arsenal.

APPLYING THE FEELINGS STEP

Understanding Empathy

Now that you have an understanding of I-Statements, emotions, and what conflict is, let's start learning more about putting the FPS Technique to use. We'll start with something easy. What is empathy, and why is it important?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, empathy is "the ability to understand and share the feelings of another." Seems pretty straightforward, right? Of course, just because something SEEMS straightforward doesn't make it so.

According to VeryWellMind.com, there are three types of empathy.

- Affective empathy is probably the simplest form. It is the ability to understand what another person is feeling and respond appropriately.
- Somatic empathy is having a physical response to someone else's emotions. For example, if someone is anxious, you may feel your heart racing.

- Cognitive empathy is more about not just understanding what a person is feeling but going further and thinking about what the other person may be thinking because of their emotions.

Now, a lot of people think that empathy is the same thing as compassion or sympathy. While they are related in a lot of ways, compassion and sympathy tend to be more passive. Empathy often makes you put or picture yourself in the situation, or “walk a mile in their shoes,” it is a lot more active.

Just like with anything, there are pros and cons of empathy.

Pros

- It helps you to connect with others in a very meaningful way.
- It can help you regulate your own emotions.
- It promotes behaviors where you want to help others.
- Cons
- Having too much empathy can lead to burnout or being overstimulated from thinking of others’ feelings.

- Empathy fatigue is a thing. This is the exhaustion you feel after repeatedly being exposed to another person's stressful or traumatic experiences. This can be a bigger concern in certain situations, such as when it is a caregiver feeling empathy fatigue, as studies show that it can also lead to compassion fatigue.
- Too much empathy can lead to questionable decision-making, as you can make decisions based on someone else's feelings.

So, while the cons are not great, the connection you can feel with another person when you are empathetic far outweighs the cons. You just have to learn to find the balance between not enough empathy and too much.

UNDERSTANDING TRIGGERS

So, what is the trigger? A trigger is an automatic response to a certain situation or stimulus. An emotional trigger is an automatic response to how another person expresses emotion.

Here is an example of a trigger. We all know that one person who was terrified of clowns growing up. Now imagine that person, as an adult, comes into contact with a person in a clown costume and makeup. That person is probably feeling fear. That fear is not directed at the individual underneath the costume and makeup, which means that the fear they are feeling is due to a trigger from their childhood.

A trigger can be anything, can often be irrational. I have a friend who is terrified of heights after a fall from a tree as a child. She will be the first to tell you that this fear is irrational, but it doesn't change fear and anxiety when she has to go over a bridge or walk down an upper hallway full of windows.

The key to triggers is to learn what exactly, it is that is triggering this certain emotion. If you

find yourself feeling a certain emotion and are unsure of why, sit and contemplate on what is causing this emotion. Once you figure out what your triggers are, you are able to work on your response to said trigger.

Going back to my friend for a moment. Once she realized that heights are a big trigger for her, she started working on how to manage her response to the trigger. She always has a response to heights, but when she starts to feel panicky, she will do a few deep breathing exercises to calm herself. Once calm, she will continue on throughout her day. I just realized it may sound like she randomly stops while driving over a bridge to do deep breathing exercises, so let me stress that she doesn't drive due to health condition, so there is no stopping on the bridge.

So, what is your trigger, and how can you change your response to it?

PRACTICE APPLYING THE FEELINGS STEP

So, here I have a couple of practice tasks for you.

TASK 1

We'll start with practicing "I-Statements." I want you to take the following sentences and change them into an I-statement.

1. You make me so mad.
2. You don't care about me!
3. You are terrible.
4. You're not listening to me.
5. You are SO lazy!

TASK 2

Let's continue with "I-statements." I want you to write five sentences similar to the ones in task 1, as well as how they would be written using "I-statements."

TASK 3

I want you to take a look at how you react when you are feeling a certain emotion. Answer the following questions and think about whether your reaction is healthy or not.

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1. How do you react when you get angry?
2. How do you react when you are happy?
3. How do you react when you are sad?
4. How do you react when you are anxious?

TASK 4

I want you to think about and answer the following two prompts.

1. Provide an example of a time when you regretted doing or saying something based on the way you were feeling.
2. Provide an example of a time when somebody responded to you in a negative way based on their feelings. How could this have been handled better?

APPLYING THE PROBLEMS STEP

Providing Evidence

In the last section, you learned how to communicate your feelings effectively. That is a big step, and you should be proud of yourself! Let's keep the ball rolling by learning how to apply the Problem step of the FPS Method.

When using the FPS Method correctly, the key is communicating what the issue is. However, it is more than just knowing what the problem is; you need to be able to explain the WHY. Why is this a problem, and how can you show that there is a reason this is an issue?

Let's start with an easy example, one in which you can gather your evidence beforehand.

Imagine that you work in customer service, and a supervisor position has just opened up. You WANT that promotion, but how do you explain to your boss WHY you deserve the position over one of your coworkers? If you are using the FPS Method, you could explain your work ethic and how you are always willing to fill in for your coworkers when the

company is short-staffed. You could also explain how you strive to provide excellent customer service, so that the company retains repeat customers. How about talking about a particularly challenging customer and how you were able to help them with their problem, so that they walked out of the store happily?

Can you see how all of this EVIDENCE of what a great employee you are would help you to explain why you deserve the promotion? Also, notice how all the evidence is clear and doesn't talk down to any coworker who may also want the promotion. After all, the FPS Technique is there to help you communicate clearly to find a solution that makes everyone happy, not to add more negativity to the world.

A good rule for providing EVIDENCE as part of the problem step is to answer the question "How do I know that?" Answer the question before the other person has to ask it.

STRENGTHENING THE PROBLEM

You've gathered your evidence. Now what? Let's discuss four steps to strengthen the Problem step of the FPS Method.

1. **Keep it simple.** You don't want to be overwhelmed by making your problem step too convoluted.
2. **Make your argument clear.** It is easy, in the heat of the moment, to bring up issues that have nothing to do with the problem you are discussing. Focus on the current problem and make it clear.
3. **Use your evidence.** You took the time to gather your evidence. Now is the time to use it.
4. **Be specific.** Often, it is easy to use generalizations and platitudes when discussing arguments. Don't do this! It is far better to be specific, so that the other person can follow your argument.

If you follow those steps, the problem will be clear, concise, and strong. Ready to put the

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Problem step to use? Take a look at the practice in the next section.

PRACTICE APPLYING THE PROBLEM STEP

Let's practice applying the Problem Step.

TASK 1

I am going to give you a scenario. I want you to think about what EVIDENCE is needed to support the Problem Step.

Imagine that you need to borrow some money from a family member to pay an outstanding bill. What EVIDENCE could you give to why you need it?

TASK 2

Using the scenario from Task 1, how can you state the problem in a simple and concise way, making it so anyone can understand?

TASK 3

I want you to write your own scenario. Explain your PROBLEM, provide EVIDENCE, and make it SIMPLE.

APPLYING THE SOLUTION STEP

Finding Common Ground

Two people will never agree on everything 100% of the time. That is where finding common ground comes in handy. According to the Oxford Dictionary, common ground is “opinions or interests shared by each of two or more parties.” So, let’s learn how to find that common ground.

Let’s see an example of finding common ground despite disagreements. Imagine, if you will, that you are at work. You and a coworker have been tasked with organizing a retreat for your department, but you disagree on what the focus should be. You believe that the focus should be

How do you find common ground when you both have strong beliefs about what the focus of the retreat should be? You find something that can be covered by both focuses. In this case, you may find that you both think that mental health in the workplace should be considered.

There are three major benefits to finding common ground with others.

1. It brings people together.

When you focus on what you have in common, you will find it easier to discuss what you don't have in common.

2. It can help you make friends more easily.

Once you know how to find common ground, making friends is easier. This is because you can focus on getting to know others by finding common ground.

3. It can open your mind to other possibilities.

Now, you may notice that I didn't go into further explanation on benefit number three. That is because it is a BIG benefit. It deserves more than just a quick sentence or two as an explanation.

When you find common ground with someone, it creates a connection with that person. When you have a positive connection with a person, you are more open to hearing

and discussing their opposing views on a subject. This often leads to beneficial conversations that will allow you to find a solution that works for everyone involved.

NEGOTIATING SOLUTIONS

This is it. This is what the FPS Method leads to. When you start using the FPS Method, you will often already have a solution in mind. However, your solution is probably not the only solution.

This is where compromise comes in handy. By having an honest conversation with another person, you can discuss different solutions to the problem. This allows you to find a way where everyone walks away happily.

According to Harvard University's blog, there are three important strategies for negotiating during business conflict resolution.

- 1. Avoid being provoked into an emotional response.**
- 2. Don't abandon value-creating strategies.**
- 3. Use time to your advantage.**

I agree that these strategies are important, not just in business, but in any conflict resolution. I also believe there is a fourth strategy:
LISTEN.

So, let's cover what each of these strategies means.

1. **Emotional response.** As we discussed in the Feelings and Problems sections, emotion does play a role in the problem. However, you need to find a solution that makes sense logically, not just emotionally.
2. **Value-creating strategies.** According to Harvard, business resolutions are often abandoned because people think resolutions in business are one-sided. However, that is not the case. Value-creating strategies simply mean that the solution creates value for all parties. In other words, be ready to compromise.
3. Use time to your advantage. What does this mean? It's simple. Take the time to think your options through.
4. **LISTEN!** This is something that so many people don't take the time to do during conflict resolutions. Listen to what the other person has to say. Listen to their ideas, discuss them, and ask them questions. You never know,

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they may have an idea for your problem that you never thought about.

If you've learned anything from this section, I hope that discussion and compromise are imperative to finding a good solution.

PRACTICE APPLYING THE SOLUTIONS STEP

We're going to make this easy. Below are five different scenarios. I simply want you to come up with as many solutions to each scenario as you can.

SCENARIO 1

You are very stressed out. You are behind on your light bill and have a week to come up with a partial payment before your electricity is shut off. How can you fix this?

Solution 1) _____

Solution 2) _____

Solution 3) _____

SCENARIO 2

You are hopeful. You plan on asking your boss for a much-deserved raise. Explain possible solutions.

Solution 1) _____

Solution 2) _____

Solution 3) _____

SCENARIO 3

You are regretful. There is a new coworker who asked for your help, but you were unable to help due to a tight deadline. They are now upset at you. How do you repair this relationship?

Solution 1) _____

Solution 2) _____

Solution 3) _____

SCENARIO 4

Don is angry. Don works for a large software company, where he is in charge of creating a monthly sales report. He has to get the sales information from the salespeople regularly to meet his deadline, but Ben always turns in his information late. This makes it hard for Don to meet his deadline. What should Don do?

Solution 1) _____

Solution 2) _____

Solution 3) _____

SCENARIO 5

Robert is frustrated. He is working on a school project with Rebecca. Robert feels Rebecca is not pulling her own weight on the project. What should Robert do to clarify the situation?

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Solution 1) _____

Solution 2) _____

Solution 3) _____

About the Author

Igomene Joseph is a self-published author whose work centers on mental health, emotional wellness, and effective communication skills. His books are available in both paperback and eBook formats through Amazon.

Driven by a passion to support individuals struggling with anger and emotional challenges, Iggy founded Facebook community Anger Management & Emotions 101. The group has grown to nearly 10,000 members dedicated to encouraging personal growth, emotional awareness, and mental wellness.

To further his mission of helping others, Iggy earned certifications in two professional fields.

He works as a Behavioral Technician, providing private support to clients, and serves as a Certified Peer Specialist, helping adults strengthen emotional coping strategies, communication skills, and personal development.

Based in Florida, Iggy enjoys life with his family while continuing to make a positive

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impact in his community through service, mentorship, and emotional wellness advocacy.

