

# **The Better Communication Technique**

## **A tutorial for teenagers**

**Karen Heart, LCSW**

**Chicago and Oak Park, Illinois**

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### **About the Better Communication Technique**

It's not a terribly scientific or sophisticated conclusion that you can improve your relationship with another person simply by communicating better. And when I say, "relationship," I mean every type of relationship. That means your primary relationships-- your relationship with your spouse, your boyfriend or girlfriend, family members, friends, bosses, and coworkers as well as other relationships, such as with your doctor, your plumber, and your auto mechanic. Even when you are talking with a clerk at a retail store for only a few minutes or a waiter at a restaurant, you establish some kind of relationship with that person, even though it's usually a very limited and brief one. We've all had "bad relationships" with store clerks and waiters at times, right? If you learn how to communicate better, you will not only improve your primary relationships with your family, friends, and coworkers, but you will also find that you relate better to clerks and waiters and, consequently, receive better treatment from them.

Just as importantly is the fact that how happy or miserable we feel in general is largely shaped by our successes and failures in relationships. If we have relationships that are rewarding, deeply personal, and lasting, we feel good. On the other hand, if we end up in arguments or fights often, or we simply distance ourselves from others and are not close with them, then we don't feel very good and may often feel sad or even miserable. Having good relationships with others brings us peace and happiness whereas having poor relationships results in our suffering strife and depression.

Perhaps the most interesting, and the most important, aspect of communicating more effectively is that it improves relationships and how we feel about ourselves, regardless of how well the other person in the relationship communicates. In other words, you can improve a relationship by communicating more effectively, even if the other person is not communicating effectively. I have heard numerous people blame the other person in the relationship for all the problems in that relationship. As I've long said, though, it takes two people to make a relationship. Both people need to work at it. Blaming others does not solve problems. If you communicate more effectively, you will be doing your part to make things work and,

consequently, you will see the relationship improve, even if the other person continues to communicate poorly.

This tutorial will explain precisely how to communicate more effectively. I will explain the technique completely, giving you specific words to use when communicating with another and how to use them. And yes, you CAN learn it, anyone can-- ANYONE! Better communication does NOT mean learning new or fancy words, learning better grammar, or going back to school. All you have to do is learn my simple technique.

It sounds simple enough, right? Like many things though, "it's easier said than done." The key to learning the technique is practice, as you will see.

One last note before I begin-- my communication method is simple and straightforward. Surprisingly, people find it difficult to use at first. I suspect that the only reason it is difficult for them to use initially is because it is so different from how they have been communicating in the past. You, too, might find it difficult to use in the beginning, but you CAN and WILL master the technique, if you simply keep trying. Remember, the more you try and the more work you put into using it, the faster your relationships will improve and the faster your life will improve overall.

### **The Underlying Belief**

To begin explaining my technique, I will divide communication into three parts: "Requesting," "Responding," and "Telling." Requesting occurs when one initiates a request to someone else. For example, "Can I have the last slice of pizza?" In that case, the request involves asking someone for something. "Did you call me?" is another example of Requesting because it requests information.

Responding is simply what you say in response to someone else's request. "Sure, you can have the last slice of pizza." "Yeah, I called earlier, but didn't leave a message."

The third part of communication-- Telling, covers everything else. Telling refers to the part of the conversation in which you simply state facts or opinions about various things. In other words, you tell someone something. Please note that Telling does not involve asking the other person for anything and, thus, it does not require any response.

My observation of human behavior is that people worry excessively about Telling. "What am I going to tell him?" "Have you told her that?" "Are you going to tell them in that way?" Universally, people labor under the delusion that telling people things is the most important part of a conversation. They believe that it is the part that determines how well they will get along with others. It is for that reason that people usually stop short from telling others what they may not want to hear. "I don't think he'll handle that news very well, so I just won't tell

him." "If she knew how I truly felt, she'd be really angry, so I'll just keep it to myself." Sound familiar?

As contrary and counterintuitive as it may seem, what you tell other people actually isn't that important to the relationship. The astounding lesson that took me years to learn is that it's what you don't say that will hurt or destroy a relationship a lot faster than what you do say. By that, I am referring to our feeling inhibited from saying what we want and what we don't want, which I will discuss shortly. While it is true that we can anger others intensely by stating facts or opinions that are offensive to them, learning discretion is more a matter of maturity than of communication technique. In short, Telling is a necessary and important part of communication, but it has little to do with forming and maintaining relationships.

It is my belief that the parts of communication that are used to forge relationships and resolve problems in them are Requesting and Responding. Therefore, my communication technique explains how to request and how to respond more effectively-- it does not address Telling at all. I leave Telling to your discretion.

Because Requesting and Responding each use different parts of the communication technique, I will address them separately. I shall begin by explaining Requesting.

## **Requesting**

When Requesting, use "I want..." statements. For example, if you want someone to fill up the tank of your car with gas, say to that person, "I want you to fill up the tank, please." Do *NOT* say, "Gee, it would be great if the car had a full tank of gas" or, worse yet, complain loudly, "I guess I'M going to have to fill up the car again!" These last two statements are manipulative, while the first statement is assertive.

This part of the technique is already familiar to a lot of people, as it is often suggested by relationship coaches and counselors. Not every agrees with this approach, however. For example, people routinely ask me during presentations whether they can begin a Request with, "I would like you to..." or "Would you please...", rather than "I want..." I always reply that if they feel the need to tone down their language, it is far better that they do so and begin using the Technique than not trying it at all.

Imagine a target, with the words, "I want..." in the bull's eye. In the next ring appears the words, "Would you please...", which is almost as direct in requesting what you want. In the outermost ring of the target appears the words, "I would like you to..." because they still convey a sense of what you want; however, they do not form a direct request. The words, "It would be great if you..." are not assertive, and therefore appear to the side of the target rather than on it.

Regardless of the exact words you use, it is important to keep the exact Technique in mind

as a guide when choosing your words. Anytime we shy away from being assertive and instead choose more manipulative language, we are censoring ourselves. While we may need to censor ourselves at times to maintain certain relationships, such as with an insecure boss, we do damage to ourselves and others when we do so, as is explained in Chapter Six of my book, "The Fine Print of Happiness."

Moreover, the particular words you choose are not the most important concern when trying to be assertive. Someone at a presentation once told me that starting a sentence with the words, "I want...", sounds very demanding, like a general barking out an order. I replied that if you shout it while you have a scowl on your face, then yes, it would be demanding. But then, it is the body language and tone of voice that are intimidating, not the words. If you state your request in a calm manner, the other person will not perceive it as aggressive or manipulative.

### **Plan for Gradual Development of Assertiveness: Saying What You Want**

At first, telling people what you want may be frightening. One way to overcome this fear of being open with others is to develop your assertiveness gradually. The following is a simple plan for developing your ability to speak freely concerning your desires. Start with the highest step you are willing to try, and when you are comfortable with it, move on to the next step:

**Step 1.** When you want something from another person, simply write down your feelings in a journal. Do not share your feelings with that person.

**Step 2.** Tell a friend about it.

**Step 3.** Tell the person what you want. Say nothing more.

**Step 4.** If the person refuses your request, seek a compromise. If you find your requests continually being denied by the other person, consider the value of continuing the relationship.

Making requests the "I want..." way may require some effort at first, especially if you are used to saying things in a round-about way. Perhaps you can create a method for reminding yourself to make requests in this way. It may sound silly, but one method to remind yourself would be to write the statement, "I want..." on a small piece of paper and place it where you will see it first thing in the morning every day, such as the bathroom or on the refrigerator door.

It, probably, will not take nearly as long as you might think to change the way you make requests to others. Lastly, please do not beat yourself up when you mess up because that will accomplish nothing, except for making you feel bad. Keep trying- you'll get it.

## Responding

The greater part of the communication technique is Responding. It is usually that part of the conversation where things go from bad to worse, and where relationships truly start to falter and deteriorate. People may not always make requests in a kind, considerate manner, but how you respond to their requests almost always makes the difference between smoothing over differences or heading for a train wreck.

Keep in mind that when you are Responding, the other person generally wants to know that the request has been heard and what you think about the request. Their first priority is making sure that they have been heard, while their second item of business is negotiating for what they want. Because of this priority, the first thing you must do in your response is to summarize what you heard and say it to the other person. Try not to repeat the exact words. Instead, paraphrase what the other person said. For example, if someone tells you that you are driving her/him mad by constantly changing the channel on the television, you can respond with a brief summary of the complaint: "You seem to be upset by my changing the channel a lot." By telling the other person what you heard, you are assuring the other person that you are truly listening to that person's concerns.

After you have summarized the other person's request, tell the other person what you think about it. First, tell the other person what you are willing to do to satisfy the request. Continuing with our example, you might say, "Ok, I won't change the channel again until I ask you first." Second, you must then explain what you are not willing to do. "I'm not willing to stop changing the channel altogether." It's vitally important that you respond in this order because if you state first what you are not willing to do, the other person will start focusing on that part of your response and will not listen as carefully to the part in which you explain what you are willing to do. Sadly, the other person may cut you off and derail the conversation as soon as you say what you are unwilling to do.

Thus, Responding can be summarized as follows:

1. Summarize what the other person wants, (**Summarize**)
2. Tell the other person what you are willing to agree to (**Willing**), and then
3. Say what you are unwilling to agree to (**Unwilling**).

In brief, it's **Summarize (S), Willing (W), Unwilling (U)**, or **SWU**.

Please note that after Responding initially to a Request, the other person then responds to the Response. In other words, the conversation continues with more Responding, and then with some additional Requesting as needed. And, to be sure, there will be a lot of Telling along the way, as people see fit. The conversation ends when there is agreement, even if it is simply to agree to disagree. Consequently, the final Response will include only what you are willing to

do and, possibly, a summary, if needed.

### **Plan for Gradual Development of Assertiveness: Saying What You Don't Want**

Disagreeing with others may also feel frightening at first. The following is a modified version of the prior plan for gradually developing your ability to speak assertively. If you fear confrontation greatly, start with Step 1. Otherwise, start with the highest step that you are willing to try. After you become comfortable performing a step, try moving on to the next step:

**Step 1.** When you feel you disagree with something someone said or did, simply write down your feelings in a journal. Do not share your feelings with that person.

**Step 2.** Tell a friend about it.

**Step 3.** Tell the person with whom you disagree, "I hear what you're saying, and I respectfully disagree," or, "I saw what you did, and I respectfully disagree." Say nothing more.

**Step 4.** Disagree respectfully, and explain how you feel about it. If the other person responds, just listen and do not argue.

**Step 5.** Disagree respectfully, and advocate for your position, meaning, ask for what you want.

**Step 6.** Finally, try to reach compromises; and, if unsuccessful, consider the value of continuing the relationship.

### **Mantra: "Take the guesswork and clutter out of communication"**

Arguably, the most important aspect of this technique for Responding is that it leaves no room for unwanted, irrelevant communication. For example, in response to someone's complaint that you turn the channel too often, you might be tempted to respond, "Well, you drink directly from the milk carton!" This response is an attack, and it will fuel a fight. More importantly, though, it simply fails to respond effectively to the other person's wants and needs. By following the Better Communication Technique closely, you will not say things that wreck the conversation; instead, you will say things that significantly improve it.

Another example of an irrelevant and ineffective response is a defensive answer. "Change the channel too often? I'll get bored if I don't!" This response merely defends yourself, it does not address the other person's concerns. It may surprise you to learn that you never need to defend yourself when responding. In fact, I strongly recommend against explaining, justifying, or excusing yourself, unless someone asks you for the reasons behind your choices. Thus, the Better Communication Technique does not include any method for defending yourself, although it certainly allows you to explain your reasons by responding appropriately to a

request for that information.

The other person wants to know what's going on in your head: what you want; what you are willing to do to get it; and what you are unwilling to do. If you withhold some of that information or give a false response, you are attempting to manipulate that other person. At that point, your relationship is no longer honest and genuine. In a sense, you don't really have a relationship with that other person-- you are merely pretending to have a relationship. The other person does not know where you stand. Never forget-- the whole purpose of the Better Communication Technique is to take the guesswork and the clutter out of the conversation.

Please note that I have presented the Technique as a somewhat rigid format-- a Request in the form of "I want...", followed by a Response in the form of Summarize, Willing, and Unwilling. This format is the distilled essence of assertive communication. It is designed to guide your thinking, even if you chose different words to express what you want and what you don't want. I fully expect that over time you will learn how to incorporate the elements of the Technique into your conversation in less rigid, more natural ways. For example, summarizing what the other person said can often help communication when making a Request. Nevertheless, it will probably help you to learn the Technique by following the format exactly, even though it might be somewhat awkward initially.

### **Learning the Better Communication Technique**

As you have seen, none of the tasks involved in the Better Communication Technique-- such as summarizing or saying what you are willing to do, are difficult to learn. These are all things you have said before many times. The difficulty lies in saying these things when you are supposed to, in the order specified, and without adding anything else to the Requesting and Responding parts of the conversation.

If you find trying to use the Technique daunting at first, try breaking it up into pieces, as suggested by the two plans above for gradual development of assertiveness. Although everyone knows how to summarize, some of my clients have experienced difficulties summarizing what others say in the heat of a conversation. Here are some phrases you can begin your responses with in order to help ease you into the practice of summarizing what others say:

"It seems like...."

"It sounds like...."

"So, I think you are saying...."

"Ok, what I'm hearing is that....Is that right?"

Additionally, even I have found it difficult at times to remember to use the Technique when

I'm embroiled in an argument with someone. Thus, it is helpful to practice using the Technique first in situations that are not stressful. As you practice it, you will find it easier to use in more trying circumstances.

Finally, it will probably help to have a copy of the following Quick Reference Chart with you as you learn the Technique. I have no further suggestions or tricks to make learning the Technique easier. It's really just a matter of forcing yourself to keep trying it, over and over, in as many conversations as you can.

### Quick Reference Chart

**Requesting: "I want..."** NOTE: You can also **Summarize** what the other person wants before making a **Request**.

**Responding: SWU**

**Summarize (S)** – *Summarize* what the other person wants,

**Willing (W)** – say what you are *Willing* to do or agree to, then

**Unwilling (U)** – say what you are *Unwilling* to do or agree to.

Following are examples of use of the Better Communication Technique.

### Examples

The following examples explain how to use the Better Communication Technique. In each example, the conversation is written first using bad communication, then it is rewritten using the Technique. I also make notes to show how the parts of the Technique are used in conversation, sometimes very naturally. Please keep in mind that the examples demonstrate only one possible way to use the Technique, they are not intended to be memorized or repeated in conversation. You will have to use the Technique as it best works for you.

**NOTE:** You might find these sample dialogues shocking and repulsive because of their graphic nature, particularly if you are a parent of a teenager. I have attempted to make them as realistic as possible for teenagers reading them. The sad truth is that these dialogs merely reflect the often shocking and degrading existence that teens often suffer.

#### Example 1. Stopping a Bully

In this example, a young man named David is bullying another young man named Alfred. David saw Alfred talking with Jenny, a girl he likes, and is jealous. David confronts Alfred in

front of his locker.

**David:** Hey man, what the hell are you doing?

**Alfred:** Excuse me? What?

**David:** What are you doing with my girl, Jenny?

**Alfred:** She ain't your girl.

**David:** Yeah, she is. [David pushes Alfred hard and then moves in closer.] What are you doing?

**Alfred:** Nothing, man. I ain't doing nothing.

**David:** Oh, yeah? Then why you talking to her, man?

**Alfred:** Hey, man, I wasn't doing nothing. We was just talking.

**David:** Yeah, that's right. Just talking. And you better stop talking to her, or I'm gonna cut your balls off, if you have any.

**Alfred:** Yeah, man, alright.

**David:** Alright.

[David turns and walks away slowly. Alfred is overwhelmed with emotion, ranging from extreme fear to rage.]

Suppose that Alfred has learned the Better Communication Technique during a workshop held at school:

**David:** Hey man, what the hell are you doing?

**Alfred:** What the hell am I doing? I don't understand.

**David:** You know what I mean, man. What are you doing with my girl, Jenny?

**Alfred:** What am I doing with Jenny? [*Summarizing*] I still don't understand. What do you want to know?

**David:** I don't want to know nothing. You better stop talking with her.

**Alfred:** Ok, it sounds like you're upset because we talk sometimes [*Summarize*] Is that right?

**David:** Yeah.

**Alfred:** Ok, well I just want you to know that I'm not trying to do anything [*Willing--agreeing that he won't "do anything" with Jenny*] We're friends. [*Telling*]

**David:** Yeah, well, she don't need no friend like you, so just get lost.

**Alfred:** Ok, it bothers you that we're friends. [*Summarize*] I don't want to make trouble, [*Willing*]but I don't want to stop being her friend. She's a nice person. [*Unwilling*]

**David:** Just stay the hell away from her. [David storms off angrily.]

Please note that Alfred added some information to his last response. Although it might seem as though he is trying to justify his actions, Alfred is clarifying his intent, he does not want to end a supportive relationship. David still felt jealous, but at least he did not threaten Alfred.

Of course, the situation would be different if Alfred was David's rival for Jenny's affection. In that case, David might well have attacked Alfred, regardless of how Alfred responded. The only way to prevent such needless violence is to teach youth how to cope with their frustrations using communication to manage their anger.

### **Example 2. Spreading Rumors**

Mike tells several people that Jake is gay and likes a boy named Ben. Jake confronts Mike one day after school. Jake asks Darnell, his friend, to help.

**Jake:** Hey Mike, what the hell is wrong with you? Why are you telling everyone I'm gay?

Stop telling people that or I'm going to punch you, you asshole.

**Mike:** [laughing] Yeah? Well, I can tell the whole school and they'll believe me, you faggot.

**Jake:** Yeah, well, I know where you live.

**Mike:** Really, what are you going to do? Is that why you brought your little faggot lover with you?

**Jake:** You want to find out what I'm going to do?

**Mike:** Oh, I'm really scared of a faggot like you.

**Jake:** I'm not queer, you son of a bitch. You'll find out.

This discussion didn't solve anything. Both boys are even madder at each other now. Let's suppose that Jake has learned the Better Communication Technique. He confronts Mike alone:

**Jake:** Mike, I heard that you are telling people that I'm gay. Is that true? [*Requesting-- information*]

**Mike:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Jake:** You know that's not true. I want you to stop telling people that I like Ben. [*Requesting-- that Mike cooperate*]

**Mike:** Yeah? Well, I can tell the whole school and they'll believe me.

**Jake:** You can tell the whole school. I can't stop you. And maybe they'll believe you.

[*Summarize*] But I don't want you to. [*Unwilling-- to agree to it*] I want you to stop.

*[Requesting, again]*

**Mike:** Why should I stop? This is getting good.

**Jake:** I'm sure it's fun for you. *[Summarize]* But it makes me mad. *[Unwilling-- to agree that it is fun.]* Please stop.

**Mike:** I'll do what I want.

**Jake:** I'm sure you do. *[Willing-- to agree that Mike does what he wants]* But I want you to stop. *[Requesting-- again]*

**Mike:** I don't have to do what you say.

**Jake:** You're right. It's your choice. *[Willing-- to agree that he cannot control Mike]*

*[Mike walks away from Jake silently.]*

Mike never apologizes or even tells Jake that he will stop, but Mike does stop spreading this rumor around school. Mike and Jake are not friends at this point, but at least they have stopped being enemies. Jake got what he wanted by saying what he wanted and what he didn't want, while still listening to what Mike had to say. This is the whole point of the Better Communication Technique.

### **Example 3. Misbehaving in Class**

John and Lisa are sitting in Ms. McGhee's history class. John starts asking Lisa about a new movie.

**John:** Lisa, have you seen that new movie, "Zombies Ate My Brain?"

**Lisa:** Be quiet, the teacher will catch us.

**John:** Don't worry about it. Have you seen it?

**Ms. McGhee:** John and Lisa, quit your yapping. You both get a classroom detention because you like class so much.

**Lisa:** But Ms. McGhee, I wasn't talking.

**Ms. McGhee:** Quit lying, Lisa. I heard you talking.

**Lisa:** John was talking to me.

**Ms McGhee:** I don't care. You were talking.

**Lisa:** But I was just telling him to be quiet.

**Ms. McGhee:** But nothing. Do you want a double detention?

**Lisa:** No.

Suppose now that Lisa has learned the Better Communication Technique. Here is how the conversation might go:

**John:** Lisa, have you seen that new movie, "Zombies Ate My Brain?"

**Lisa:** Be quiet, the teacher will catch us.

**John:** Don't worry about it. Have you seen it?

**Ms. McGhee:** John and Lisa, quit your yapping. You both get a classroom detention because you like class so much.

**Lisa:** Yes, Ms. McGhee, I was talking. I'm sorry. [*Summarize and Willing-- to agree*] I don't think I should be punished because I was only telling John to stop talking to me.

[*Unwilling-- to agree to punishment*]

**Ms. McGhee:** It's not your job to tell John to be quiet.

**Lisa:** It's not my job, you're right. [*Summarize*] I won't do it again. [*Willing-- to stop*] But I don't think I should be punished. [*Unwilling-- to agree to punishment, again*]

**Ms McGhee:** You shouldn't have been talking.

**Lisa:** Yes, you're right. I won't do it again. [*Willing-- to stop, again*]

**Ms. McGhee:** Ok. John, you still get a detention.

Notice that even though she is still angry, Ms. McGhee listens to Lisa and changes her mind about punishing her. Ms. McGhee listened because Lisa listened to her and responded in a very direct but respectful way. People almost always appreciate it when you say what's on your mind directly but respectfully.

#### **Example 4. Arguing with Your Parents**

Julie intends to go to the movies with her boyfriend, Dimitri. Instead of asking for permission from her mom, however, she simply announces to her mom that she is going.

**Julie:** I'm going to the movies with Dimitri. See you later.

**Mom:** You can't go to the movies. The family is coming over tonight.

**Julie:** I don't care. I have a date.

**Mom:** The hell you do. Now just stop it.

**Julie:** Why do I have to stay home for the family? I hate this stupid family anyway.

**Mom:** You're not going and that's final!

Julie got off to a bad start with her mom, and then made it worse. If she learned the Better Communication Technique, she could get her mom to listen and respond better:

**Julie:** I want to go with Dimitri to the movies now. Alright? [*Requesting*]

**Mom:** You can't go to the movies. The family is coming over tonight.

**Julie:** The family is coming over? [*Summarize*]. I forgot. Can I still go? [*Requesting*]

**Mom:** No, I just said the family is coming over.

**Julie:** Oh, so you're saying I can't go at all, even later? [*Summarize*]

**Mom:** Right. We're all going to be together, and by the time they leave it will be too late for you to go out with Dimitri.

**Julie:** Ok, I understand. [*Willing-- to agree that she will not go*]

**Mom:** Maybe you can go out with him tomorrow.

**Julie:** Maybe another time [*Willing-- to agree*], but not tomorrow. He's busy. [*Unwilling-- to agree*]

**Mom:** Maybe next time you can tell me earlier that you want to go on a date so that we can make plans?

**Julie:** Ok, I will. [*Willing-- to agree*]

Even though Julie did not get to go out with Dimitri that night, the conversation went much better. Her mom even offered to help her plan to go out another time. Communicating better will improve your relationships with others, even though you won't always get what you want.

### **Example 5. Arguing with a Friend**

Monique and Emma are friends. They agreed to meet at a video store at noon on Saturday to hang out. Monique waited at the store, but after an hour Emma had still not shown up, so Monique left. They run into each other at school on the following Monday:

**Emma:** Hey, Monique. How's it going?

**Monique:** I don't want to talk to you.

**Emma:** Why?

**Monique:** You know perfectly why.

**Emma:** Are you talking about the video store? I didn't think it was big deal.

**Monique:** A big deal? I waited there for over an hour and we had some plans.

**Emma:** But I was busy shopping with my mom.

**Monique:** Then how come you didn't call me?

**Emma:** Because I forgot.

**Monique:** Well, you can't forget about being friends with me.

**Emma:** Whatever.

[They walk away from each other.]

Now suppose that Emma has learned the Better Communication Technique. Here is how the conversation might go:

**Emma:** Hey, Monique. How's it going?

**Monique:** I don't want to talk to you.

**Emma:** Why?

**Monique:** You know perfectly why.

**Emma:** I know why? [*Summarize*] I'm not really sure. [*Unwilling-- to agree*]. Are you mad that I was late to the video store? [*Requesting*]

**Monique:** Yeah! I waited there for over an hour for you.

**Emma:** You're right, we did have plans. [*Summarize*] I did go, [*Willing-- to meet her*] but I was really late. [*Unwilling-- explaining she was unable to meet on time*] I'm sorry.

**Monique:** How come you didn't call me?

**Emma:** I didn't call you because I forgot. [*Summarizing and Willing-- to answer the question honestly*] I'm really sorry.

**Monique:** You forgot?

**Emma:** Yeah, I did. [*Willing-- to answer*] Like I said, I'm sorry.

**Monique:** Ok. Next time call, alright?

**Emma:** Alright. [*Willing-- to agree*]

Talking in this way helps the other person calm down. Because she was more calm, Monique could listen to Emma and forgive her for not showing up on time. It also helped that Emma apologized for being late and for not calling.

## Conclusion

The conversations above demonstrate how you can get others to listen better to you. When you talk this way, everyone is friendlier to you and you will find it easier to get along with others, including difficult people. Don't believe me? Try it and see for yourself!