

# Management course paper

Business, Management



Roger and Roethlisberger state in their highly acclaimed article “Barriers and Gateway to Communication” that one of the major barriers effecting interpersonal communication between two human beings is the evaluative nature of Human Beings. In a typical inter personal communication between two individuals each person tries to evaluate the attitude of the partner towards oneself. Furthermore each party looks for signs of negative perception about oneself in the eyes of the partner at the same time passing negative judgment about the partner. So essentially an individual analyzes the communication to determine the answers to following questions;

What is his/her attitude towards me?

What does he/she think about me and my opinion and ideas?

What do I think about him/her (What kind of a person is he?)?

Thus in the process of finding answers to these questions people tend to miss out the main points and the true meaning of what the partner is trying to say. This situation leads to misunderstanding and the communication turns into an argument which may further deteriorate into a verbal war.

Roger and Roethlisberger propose that active listening helps to make the communication effective. Active listening means that a person must be able to understand what exactly his/her partner is trying to say? This can be achieved when one understands the emotions and feelings of the partner and perceives the partner's words as the partner perceives them. Thus in a communication each individual must restate their partners words to their partners satisfaction, this ensures that the person gets the true meaning of his partners statements.

Perceiving the others frame of mind is only possible when one checks his tendency to [1] evaluate, thus effective listening is not an easy task in fact it is a skill which has to be gradually developed. Roger and Roethlisberger further propose that when interpersonal communication takes place at a group level it becomes difficult to perceive the opponents frame of mind so using a mediator who restates the statements of each person or group helps to solve the problem. When an individual knows that his statements are being restated to his satisfaction and the fact that he is being understood mollifies him, he in turn tries to understand what his opponent wants to say? And the communication progresses effectively and a solution to the problem in discussion is easily achieved.

#### Answer to Question 2

The process of active listening in an interpersonal communication requires that an individual empathies with the partner. This is accomplished by perceiving the world as perceived by the partner, however involving oneself in the frame of reference of another individual may lead to unwanted outcomes. The following is a list of unwanted possibilities that may occur due to extreme empathy.

A person may begin to appreciate others ideas over his own. His priorities may be replaced by someone else's.

An individual may loose his identity and his personality may be altered. He may be manipulated by the person he is empathizing with or other people may perceive he is being manipulated or is working under someone's influence. Because of these reasons people tend to be afraid of active

listening, furthermore active listening is possible only when both the parties engaging in an interpersonal communication are willing to implement the techniques of active listening. In case only one individual practices active listening while the other continues in an argumentative mode then the individual who is using active listening may be discouraged in doing so and may resort to adopt an argumentative approach.

The fear of active listening is more apparent in real life work environment. In an organization every individual is accountable to their immediate boss and is responsible for their immediate subordinates. The manager looks at all things from a broader perspective and is responsible for activities of all his subordinates, thus he has to make sure that the function that is delegated to him synchronizes well with other organizational function in the process of achieving the organizational objective. A subordinate on the other hand works on a narrower perspective and is only responsible for the job allotted to him or the team to which he belongs, so a subordinate is only concerned with the problem that he faces in the process of accomplishing his task.

In an interpersonal communication between the manager and a subordinate the manager stands the risk of losing his priorities if he applies active listening. Let us consider a factual case where a group of laborers present their problems to a manager who is genuinely concerned about his subordinates as well as the company as a whole. If the manager gets totally involved in his perception of the subordinates frame of reference then he loses his perspective and begins to evaluate the situation from a narrower perspective in doing so he forgets to analyze the situation from the

organizational point of view and rather takes works on the problem at a personal level.

Thus active listening is best practiced when the manager is capable of using the technique without getting deeply involved in subordinate's frame of reference. Managers who successfully employ active listening are able to make their subordinates feel good and this also helps in motivating the subordinates, furthermore managers who practice active listening are capable of gaining their subordinates trust and respect. (Roger & Roethlisberger)

[1] Roger and Roethlisberger (Barriers and Gateway to communication 1991)