

Name _____

Hour _____

Communication Breakdown A Repair Guide

1. The Communicare repair technician explains that his ability to fix two of the most common problems enables him to handle 80% of all service calls. List the two problems.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. Attacking helps the offender feel _____, while admitting feelings leaves one _____.
3. The power of the _____ can be used to clear some clogged communication channels.
4. To solve the second most common service call he show how to find the truth hiding behind _____.

Common Repair #1: The Voodoo Effect

Communication often breaks down when one person unwittingly (or uncaringly) attacks another's extended self. The "attacker" is often unaware of the offense and cannot understand why the "attacked" should be offended.

For example, "Mom, there's nothing in the house to eat." This often heard complaint is rarely meant literally - there's almost always *something* to eat. But the complaint "sticks a pin" in mom's extended self by attacking her ability to keep food on hand. The person making the complaint simply wants to eat and cannot understand why mom should feel under attack.

When the attack is changed into a statement about yourself, this usually represents a more honest communication. Merely beginning a sentence with the word "I" is not enough. Saying, "I think there's nothing in the house to eat," doesn't change the attack. A statement such as, "I sure like it when you buy those pretzel twists" would not be offensive.

Change the attacks below into honest "I" statements.

1. You always leave a mess wherever you go; what a slob.

2. That's the worst looking shirt and tie combination I've ever seen.

3. Boy, did that hair stylist do you in.

4. You made a real mess of that award winning recipe. Don't make that one again.

5. When we go to parties together, you talk too much.

6. You never think of me when you're out shopping.

Common Repair #2: Uncovering the Statement Behind the Question

Questions are asked in order to seek information, right? Well sometimes. Questions are also used to control and manipulate. The reason questions can cause a communication breakdown is that the asker pressures the person asked for answers. Often, the question is used to hide a more honest statement of feelings. For example, a student who asks, "why do we have to study this stuff?" is not asking why algebra is part of sophomore curriculum. That student is probably saying, "I don't understand very much of this." Changing "Why do we have to.." into "I'm frustrated," is clearer, more honest communication.

Here are some statements disguised as questions. Take each question and turn it into a clearer and more honest I-statement.

1. Do we have to all go together on vacation this summer?

2. Are you sure you want to take Trig as your elective?

3. Why do you have to interrupt me so often in conversation?

4. Can't you keep your room neat like Sue used to?

5. Do you have to laugh with that loud shrill all the time?

6. (Parent to daughter) Do you have to wear such short skirts?
