

Three foundational principles of Intentional Communication:

1. The meaning of communication is the response it elicits.

(Bottom line – the outcome embodies the quality of the communication.)

2. I can't "not" communicate.

(If you're living, you are communicating – whether verbally or non-verbally.)

3. I am responsible for the communication – my role as Speaker and Listener.

(Communication is purposeful. You are responsible for communicating in a manner that promotes understanding and yields intended outcomes.)

Intentional Communication Technique	Suggested Usage
Ask rather than Tell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead with a question rather than stating disapproval, disagreement or challenging a statement.
Make a clear request, rather than implying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't wait for people to "guess" what you're thinking. Be direct with a respectful question or request. Example: don't just imply that you need assistance, request it.
Make a proposal and/or revise for consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the team doesn't agree, don't endlessly churn over it - offer a revised option and check for consensus.
Engage with the preferences of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be conscious and aware that everyone perceives the world differently. Each view of reality is colored by personal preferences, beliefs, values and experiences. Be aware that some people prefer to "appreciate before critiquing", and some "cut to the chase". Be aware that some need the big picture and context before delving into detail, and some need the detail from which they can infer the big picture. Be aware that some people want to hone in to a tightly bound scope and some prefer to broaden the scope of study. Scope needs to be defined clearly in any effort, so take care to balance these viewpoints by defining acceptable criteria for deciding what's in and what's out. Be aware that some prefer to come to decision quickly and some prefer to stay open to new information. Take care to balance these preferences to include necessary information for decisioning, but avoid point of diminishing returns.
Check for understanding frequently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a Speaker or Listener, check for understanding frequently whether one-on-one or working with a group.
Assume good intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume that we all want to do our work well, and do what's best for the customer, company and colleagues... interpret comments from this basis of good intent. It helps to diffuse frustration and prevent escalation and misunderstanding.

Intentional Communication Technique	Suggested Usage
Consider the words you use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than saying "You don't understand"... consider saying "I'm not making myself clear..." or "Let me rephrase that..." • Rather than saying "You should" or "You need to", consider saying "Are you willing to...?" or "We need to ..., are you willing to assist with that?" • Rather than saying "Let me tell you something", consider saying "Let me share my experience", or "My experience with that has been...." • Rather than saying "What's your problem", consider saying "Is there an issue?", or "Do you have a concern?" • Consider using the word "<i>Consider...</i>" It opens up a world of possibility.
Allow time for response to questions; don't assume that silence = agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you ask a question, learn to "count to 10" before moving on... some people need more than a nano-second to formulate a response.
Close the communications loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for understanding during the communication dialogue. • It's OK to "agree to disagree". • If closure on the topic is not reached, agree on when to resume the dialogue. • Follow up.
Respect one another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique ideas and content, not people. • Treat one another with respect. • Everyone has something to offer. • Agree to disagree on items that are not crucial to outcomes.