

Effective Communication-Participant

Friends and Family

Have friends and family members encouraged you throughout this transition. A loyal support network can be extremely important during the inevitable ups and downs that may come during this period of change. They can provide you with encouragement, distraction, humor, and warmth when you need it. Many people find it very helpful to have one or more close friends positively involved in their decision to quit. If you have supportive people around you - use them! Don't hesitate to involve them in your effort. Let them know what things they can do or say to be helpful, and also what may be less helpful to you during this transition. Most people around you really want you to succeed.

Support Network

Write down the names of family members and friends who will support your attempt to quit cigarettes and encourage you to try again if you relapse. Carry the list with you in your wallet or carry it with you in your head by memorizing it. This will be your support team whenever you crave a cigarette. Feel free to keep your list private or share it with the group.

Unfortunately, not everyone who quits has support. Indeed, some report that quitting seems to make their friends or family members angry. If these people are smokers, they may feel threatened by your quitting. They may be worried that you will no longer want them to smoke around you. Or, your quitting may make them confront their own wish to quit. They might be envious of your success or prefer you remain a smoker.

If you have someone around you who is not helping you quit smoking, take an active, assertive approach to the problem. If possible, discuss the situation with the person. If they are a smoker, be sure they know that you still care for them even though you are no longer a smoker. Remind them that when they want to quit, you want to be helpful. Try to involve them in your QUIT efforts in a positive way. If this is not possible, consider ways to minimize the negative effects they may have on you.

It would be nice if everyone supported our efforts to quit smoking. This is not always the case. Resolve not to let anyone interfere with your decision to quit smoking and stay quit.

Communication

Using **I Feel... WHEN... BECAUSE...** Statements

Developing effective communication skills may help you seek and obtain the support you need from those around you. One model uses a sentence format that includes “I feel... when... because...” statements to share needs and feelings without accusing or putting others on the defensive. Each sentence is begun with the statement “I feel (fill in the blank)...when (blank occurs)... because...”

Examples:

I feel... unsupported
angry
hurt,
like I’m not respected
like I’m not trusted
unloved
inadequate
annoyed
frustrated
tense
happy
thankful

When... you continue to ask me if I’d like a cigarette
you smoke in front of me
we go to a smoke-filled restaurant
you tell me that I’ve been more moody since I quit...

Because... it makes me feel like you don’t respect my decision to quit
it’s still very difficult for me to resist a smoke
it makes me think you want to see me fail

Using “**I feel**” statements rather than “**You**” statements will allow you to voice your feeling and concerns without sounding accusatory, critical, or judgmental. “**You**” statements, including “You make me so angry.” “You always say...” or “You never help me...”, can often trigger confrontation or arguments. Can you think of an encounter when this has occurred?

Effective Communication

Look at the following list to remind yourself of patterns that lead to positive communication:

Effective Communication Skills

Effective communication skills are essential to every relationship. Not only *what* you say but *how* you say it often determines how you're viewed and others will respond.

Tips for Effective Communication:

1. Respect others. Respect requires trust, equality and empathy. Treat others as you wish to be treated, and value their opinions.
2. Listen. Attentive listening requires participation, openness and receptivity. Practice: *Clarifying*. Ask questions when you're unsure. *Repeating*. To minimize misunderstanding, summarize what you hear. *Reflecting feelings*. Let friends and family members know that you hear and understand their thoughts. Consider what someone are feeling but not saying. Try *empathy*: "If that happened to me, I'd be angry."
3. **Think before responding. Don't speak when you're angry or upset. Instead, take time to prepare and rehearse before confronting a potentially difficult conversation.**
4. Avoid malicious gossip.
5. **Develop an appropriate speaking style and body language. How you speak is just as important as what you say.** Consider your tone of voice and how it will be interpreted. Avoid grimaces, lip biting, rolling your eyes, fidgeting and using an accusatory tone. Sit erect. Stand tall, shoulders back.
6. Be assertive. Make your needs and requests clear in a friendly way. Stick to the facts and set boundaries.
7. **Recognize and respect differences. Gender, cultural background, birthplace, occupation and personality all influence communication.** Recognizing and respecting differences can help reduce misunderstandings.
8. Give praise. Support and advice within friendships are essential for good relations. Show your appreciation for those you care about. Praise often and publicly.

Source: <http://careers.usatoday.com/5erVice/uSalnatiOnal/cOnten~qU1~zsesIcoI1111IIIInIicate> By Carole Kanchier, special for the USA TODAY Careers Network

Which of these come naturally to you? Which could use a little more practice?

Poor Communication

It's quite easy for bad communication patterns to sneak into our interactions with others, especially during periods of tension or stress. Do any of these traits look familiar to you? Which do you need to be mindful of avoiding?

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF POOR COMMUNICATION

1. **Truth** - You insist that you are "right" and the other person is "wrong."
2. **Blame** - You say that the problem is the other person's fault.
3. **Martyrdom** - You claim that you're an innocent victim.
4. **Put-down** - You imply that the other person is a loser because he or she "always" or "never" does certain things.
5. **Hopelessness** - You give up and insist there's no point in trying.
6. **Demands** - You say you're entitled to better treatment but you refuse to ask for what you want in a direct, straightforward way.
7. **Denial** - You insist that you don't feel angry, hurt, or sad when you really do.
8. **Passive aggression** - You pout or withdraw or say nothing. You may storm out of the room or slam doors.
9. **Self-blame** - Instead of dealing with the problem, you act as if you're an awful, terrible person.
10. **Helping** - Instead of hearing how depressed, hurt, or angry the other person feels, you try to "solve the problem" or "help" him or her.
11. **Sarcasm** - Your words or tone of voice convey tension or hostility that you aren't openly acknowledging.
12. **Scapegoat** - You suggest that the other person has "a problem" and that you're sane, happy, and uninvolved in the conflict.
13. **Defensiveness** - You refuse to admit any wrongdoing or imperfection.
14. **Counterattack** - Instead of acknowledging how the other person feels, you respond to their criticism by criticizing them.
15. **Diversion** - Instead of dealing with how you both are feeling in the here-and-now, you list grievances about past injustices.

Source: http://www.geocities.commonlovecausedproblems/characteristics_of_bad_communication.html From: "The Feeling Good Handbook" by David D. Burns, M.D.

Begin to think about situations when using "**I feel... when... because...**" statements and positive communication skills might improve your daily interactions with others. Like all skills, using constructive communication skills takes time and continual practice.

This is a good opportunity to think about how you might want to communicate your need for assistance from a family member or friend.