



3 COMMUNICATIONS BASICS THAT BUILD CONFIDENCE

Easy tips to feel more resilient and controlled
(or at least appear so). BY MERILEE KERN

Communication is ingrained in every facet of life, yet many struggle with fear, insecurity and general ineffectiveness when they find themselves eye-to-eye with someone to present ideas, address complicated situations, express feelings, negotiate or just “sell themselves” in both personal and professional contexts.

According to Megan Rokosh, who is a global business communications expert with over 12 years of agency public relations, media and creative strategy experience, “Some people are paralyzed with fear at the very thought of taking an idea and communicating it, both in the workplace and in their everyday life. However, confidence can be significantly bolstered by heeding even a few simple

strategies — some basic fundamentals and essentials — that can improve one’s poise and self-assurance ... and results of the endeavor at hand.”

Here are three of Rokosh’s confidence-building communications requisites.

Craft situation diffusion dialogue

Create an assortment of “go-to” statements you can have at the ready to handle awkward or hard situations and moments. These are assertions and declarations that you know work well and that you can whip out quickly when needed.

For example, if you are late to a social outing, rehearse saying, “I am so sorry I kept you waiting. My rule is when I am late, all the drinks are on me.” Or, when

you’re at a loss for words, you can assert, “I could have sworn that I packed my tongue today,” and lighten the moment. Having such short statements up your proverbial sleeve helps to avoid stumbling your way through awkward moments.

Give in to vulnerability

Vulnerability often equals likability, and they are indelibly connected — so use that truth to your benefit. There is nothing much more off-putting than arrogance, and seeming vulnerable can make you more relatable.

If you’re nervous and kicking off a meeting, tell your audience to “be gentle with you” and have a quick laugh to loosen everyone — and yourself — up.

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☺ Use humor to lighten up the moment and put both yourself and others at ease.

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Self-effacing humor can be a powerful tool. Or, if you're having a difficult time understanding something, you can say, "I'm so sorry if I'm holding us up here, but would you mind explaining one more time?" Your contrition will surely endear.

Address adversities head on

You will undoubtedly face times at work and at home that require you to address something difficult. Although challenging and scary, the situation usually must be addressed to be effectively resolved. Great leaders always speak up, and you should too.

Make clear from the beginning that you intend to hear and consider the other person's side, stating something like, "Your perspective is valid and I really want to hear what you have to say, but first, please allow me to share my thoughts," followed by the suitable words. This will give you the floor, hopefully uninterrupted, since the other party has been given the

assurance that it will have a chance to present its side as well.

As goes without saying, this discourse should be in person versus via text or email whenever that is a possibility. There are times when a call or in-person meeting is just the right thing to do and where words, inflections and expressions are far more impactful and meaningful when face-to-face.

Learning to communicate

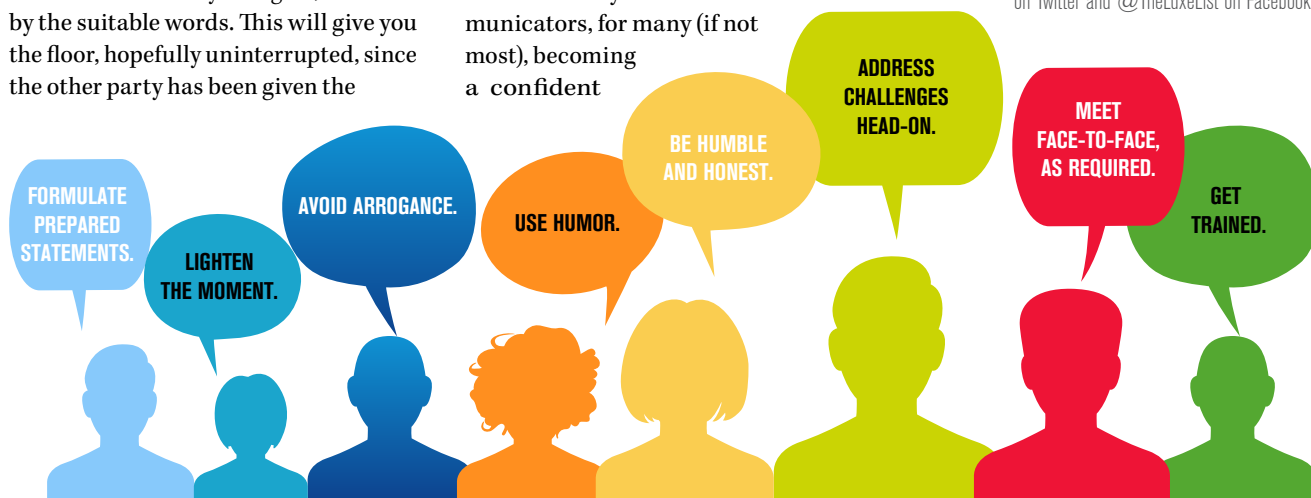
Rokosh also reminds us that the world's best communicators are trained. "It's very rare that an incredible communicator has not put in extensive work toward their oration skills so they can speak eloquently, pause in powerful silence when appropriate, address very difficult media questions, etc.," she notes. "It's important to remember that, while some people are inherently talented communicators, for many (if not most), becoming a confident

communicator requires learned skills. It's one simple strategy like those above built upon each other — and proactively putting them to use — that will get you where you want and need to be."

As an advice-doling expert, Rokosh doesn't just talk the talk — she walks the walk. Having worked with many high-profile global organizations and consulted with C-suite executives from nearly every industry, she's created hugely successful platforms founded on effective communications. This includes working directly with top-tier media like Forbes, Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, Ad Age, Adweek and scores more. Rokosh was even invited to partake in the elite "Business of Media, Entertainment and Sports" program at Harvard.

So, if effectively communicating is an area of insecurity for you, if you find yourself being held back by fear or if you just want to amp up your existing communications prowess, try Rokosh's three easy tips outlined in this article to feel more resilient and controlled — or, at least, exude the image that you are.

Branding, business and entrepreneurship success pundit, Merilee Kern, MBA, is an influential media voice and lauded communications strategist. As the executive editor and producer of "The Luxe List International News Syndicate," she's a revered trends expert and travel industry voice of authority who spotlights noteworthy marketplace change makers, movers and shakers. Merilee may be reached online at www.TheLuxeList.com. Follow her @LuxeListEditor on Twitter and @TheLuxeList on Facebook.



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