

**TALK IT OUT  
6 WAYS THAT  
YOU'RE A POOR  
COMMUNICATOR**

Technology gets a lot of the blame for the degradation of communication skills among leaders during the past two decades. But I suggest that technology, like any tool, can be used in positive or negative ways.

What really matters is how we choose to communicate and use our tools. Since communication norms are deeply woven into every organization's culture, this challenge starts with the CEO.

Everything we do happens through our relationships. When communication is poor, the relationship is poor.

Take a few moments to see if you notice any of these poor interaction habits in leaders you know, including yourself:

**1. Jumping to task before understanding the full picture.**  
Take the time to gather information and listen carefully.

**2. Unskilled at, or choosing not to have, effective conversations.**  
Learn this skill or get out of

leadership.

**3. Failing to engage others in decisions that impact them.** Ask yourself, "Who is impacted by this decision?" and engage them early in the process.

**4. Failing to demonstrate authentic empathy.** One solution: Slow down and truly put yourself in another person's shoes.

**5. Ego and personal agenda.** Ask yourself, "Do I really need to be or prove I am right? Or do I want my team to succeed no matter whose idea it is?"

**6. Inability to facilitate a productive discussion.** Learn these skills or engage skilled facilitators to help you.

The solution to improving communication skills in your organization is to make it matter. What you reward is what you will get. What you don't reward is what you will get much less often.

A leader's No. 1 responsibility is to create and nurture the desired culture to get the desired results. At the end of the day, when we are not truly listening, we are not leading. Period.

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