

## Twelve Commandments of Communication

**Psalm 141:3** *Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;  
keep watch over the door of my lips!*

### 1. **CRITICAL PAUSE**

When the temperature or temper is beginning to rise,  
STEP AWAY before its gets too hot

### 2. **LEVEL 5**

When something potentially hurtful simply **MUST** be said,  
ASK before speaking

### 3. **NO INTERRUPTING**

Interrupting shows a lack of respect  
and conveys that you are not listening

### 4. **NO TEASING**

Someone is **ALWAYS** the butt of a joke or tease;  
the best way to care for a heart is to never tease

5. Before you speak:

Is it **TRUE?** Is it **NECESSARY?** Is it **NICE?**

6. While you speak, think, **WAIT:**

### **Why Am I Talking?**

(See Ephesians 4:29 as a guideline)

7. When it comes to teamwork, follow the **110% RULE:**  
When we all give 110%, we all win

### 8. **ASSUME the BEST**

There will always be room for doubt; always **choose** to  
consciously assume the best

9. It's better to be **HAPPY** than **right**  
or, It's better to be **HAPPY** than **heard** (See also Rules 5&6)

### 10. **Brutal HONESTY is just brutal**

11. **FOCUS on the 90% positive**  
not the 10% negative

### 12. **Listen**

don't fix it

*Eph 4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths,  
but **only such as is good for building up**, as fits the occasion,  
that it may give grace to those who hear*

## The 12 Commandments of Communication Explained

1. **Critical Pause:** If the temperature and voices are starting to rise, step away from the situation, not to walk away and never go back, but to prevent anger and hurtful words. Communicate that you just need to take a short break and coordinate when you WILL talk more later. Use the break to calm down, think things through and pray. But ALWAYS go back to the person and continue to a resolution.
2. **Level 5:** Level 1 is "Hey, how are you?" Level 5 is, "I need to tell you something that might hurt." The other levels are in between. Ask permission before spilling the beans. If the answer is no, let it be. Pray. If the answer is yes, gently SANDWICH the hard words between positive words or compliments. Continue to a resolution.
3. **NO INTERRUPTING:** Interrupting communicates a lack of respect and that you are not really listening but rather planning your reply. Listen and be patient.
4. **NO TEASING:** There is always a butt of a joke. Teasing is always at someone's expense. Why would you choose to laugh at the expense of someone you care about?
5. Is it TRUE? Is it NECESSARY? Is it NICE?  
If it's not true, don't say it. If it's true but not really necessary or helpful, don't say it. If it's true and must be said, find a way to say it nicely or don't say it. See also Rule 2.
6. **WAIT: Why Am I Talking?** Are you building others up? Are you extending grace? If you find yourself going on and on, beating the dead horse and restating your point *again*, STOP. Ask questions. Determine to understand what the other is trying to communicate.
7. **110% RULE:** If you give 110% and your teammate(s) give 110%, we will receive 110%. When we "share the burden" and give 50%, we receive the same...half of our potential. It is better to give than receive.
8. **ASSUME the BEST:** Between our own fallen state and an enemy whispering lies, communication is always challenged. Choose to always assume the best and seek clarification where needed.
9. It's better to be happy than right (or heard): Which is more important? The relationship or being right? If it's the relationship, then preserve the relationship at the cost of your own "win". With the relationship preserved, we may readdress the issue later. *You are not Jesus' policeman.*
10. **Brutal honesty is just brutal:** Honesty is the best policy...but timing and delivery matter, too. See Rules 2, 5 and 9.
11. **Focus on the 90% positive not the 10% negative:** As you think about the situation, choose what you dwell on carefully. Choose to rehearse the positive. Pray. If the negative MUST be addressed, see Rules 2 and 5 for talking about it.
12. **Listen - Don't Fix it:** How often do you just want someone to listen? Choose to just listen. If you feel compelled, ask, "Do you want my advice?" If not, then refer to Rule 12 ☺. If so, refer to the other rules.