

◇ Chapter 6
Effective Communication Skills

Relationship Skills

CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION

It has been said that good communication occurs when the other person does what you want. Actually, good communication is more than that. Have you ever considered the emotional effect your message may have on others? Messages can be *constructive*, giving the receivers positive feelings about themselves and the sender. Messages can also be *destructive*. This gives the receivers negative, or even antagonistic, feelings about the communication. How someone *feels* about a message often determines the success or failure of the communication process.

Directions: To explore the effects of destructive and constructive communication, try the activity below with a partner. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Communication Activity



Begin by telling your partner about an idea you have that you think would improve your school. While you are talking, your partner is to make destructive comments to you. These comments should be negative and sarcastic.



They should belittle you and your ideas. Some examples are: "Oh, that's impossible; it would never work," and "That's a dumb idea." After two or three minutes, have your partner tell you about an idea. You make the same kinds of destructive remarks.

Next, spend a few minutes telling your partner about something that you would like to do that you have never had the opportunity to do. Your partner is to make constructive comments, such as, "That sounds like fun," and "Tell me more." Switch again. Have your partner describe an activity while you make constructive remarks.

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Thinking About What Happened

1. Give two examples of the destructive remarks you and your partner made. _____

2. List two constructive remarks you and your partner made. _____

3. How did you feel about yourself, your message, and your partner when you heard the destructive remarks?

4. How did you feel about yourself, your message, and your partner when you heard the constructive remarks?

5. Compare the effects of the destructive remarks and the constructive remarks on the conversation.

6. What might cause a person to make destructive remarks in a conversation? _____

