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COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE



Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication

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THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The appreciation and study of human communication arises from research, observation, practice, and theories that explain the phenomena, realities, and facts of communication; the various components, characteristics, and qualities of human expression and exchange; and the innumerable circumstances, conditions, events, and experiences it creates, in our occurring world, throughout life.

Communication theories, as systematic, scientific explanations, offer principles and practices, models and metaphors, patterns and paradigms that unify and clarify facts, that define and describe the essence of expression and exchange, that create comprehension and understanding for interactivity and its influence and effect on being and becoming, on existence and reality, through countless circumstances, conditions, contexts, and events experienced in life. Although no theory offers an absolute explanation or representation of reality, we advance our comprehension and understanding of communication – we advance our skills, practice, and proficiency – using the facts, components, and qualities of human expression and exchange in theory.

OBSERVATION, RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND THEORY

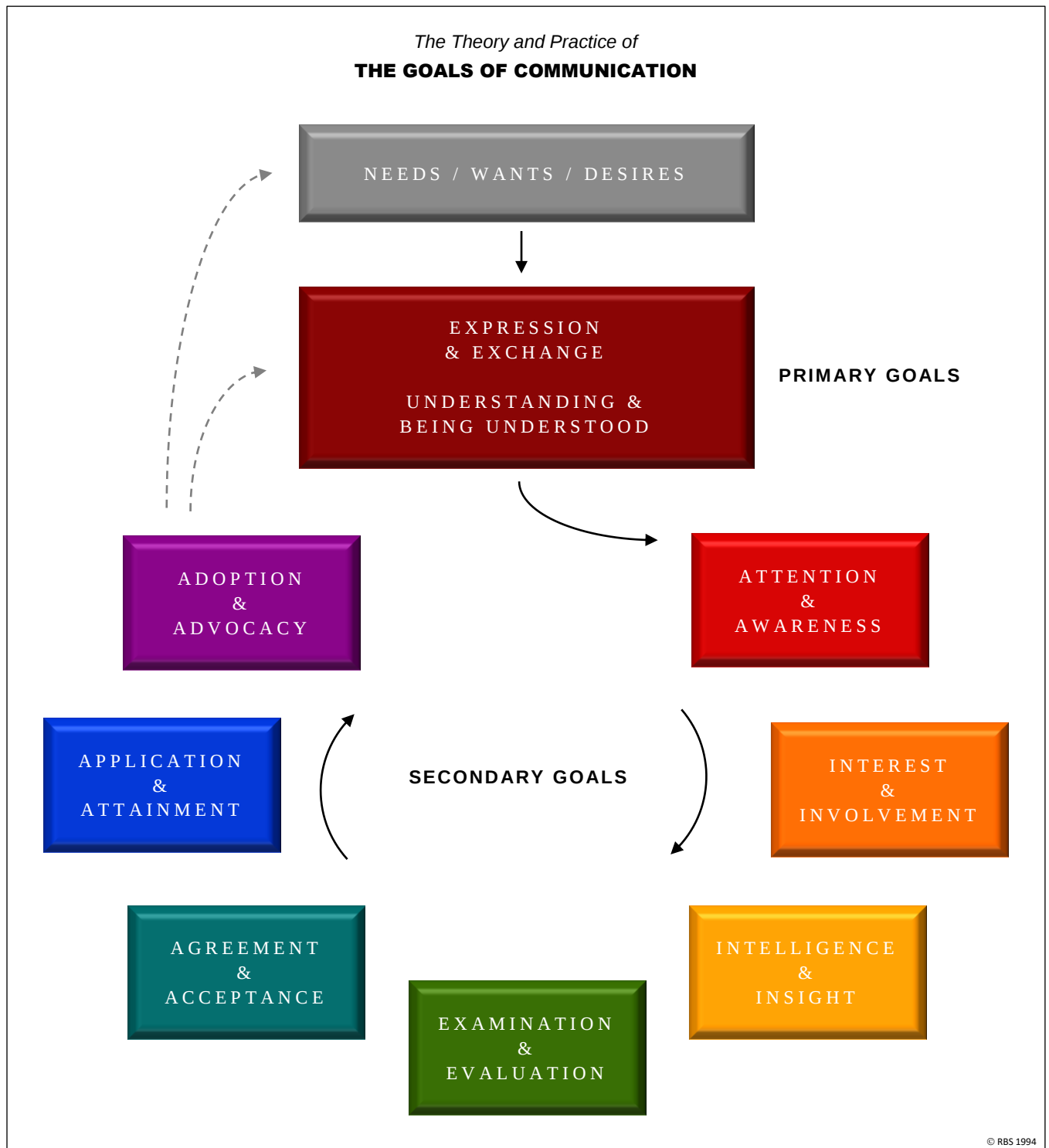
Working nearly fifty years in the business of business communications as a communications specialist, strategist, creative director, writer, and designer, to mention a few areas of my experience and expertise, I have always been fascinated in the nature of human expression and exchange especially in learning and knowing what works and what doesn't work to produce intended outcomes. Accordingly, I have a deep interest in the exploration, observation, study, and research of communication and the practical, productive application of models and theories, assumptions and ideals, opinions and principles. My background in business communications includes promotional and motivational communications; advertising; public and professional relations; internal and external corporate communications; technical, educational, clinical, and scientific writing; public speaking and broadcast media; professional education, instruction, and training programs; and leadership training and personal coaching. Besides the research of professionals and theorists, I have also conducted various forms of research over the years for my clients including surveys, one-on-one studies, image and message testing, focus groups, market analyses, and more.

In my expertise and experience, I have come to recognize certain facts, realities, and phenomena of human communication; accordingly, I have established a series of theories, based on universal truths, which advance our knowledge and understanding of expression and exchange, which advance our skills, practice, and proficiency for achieving full self-expression, for reaching desired outcomes, for satisfying our needs, wants, and desires in life. The Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication is third in a series.

GOALS OF COMMUNICATION

We do not communicate for the sake of expression and exchange, the sake of conveying information, or the sake of adhering to the conventions of conversation. Simply stated, we communicate to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires. As we know, humans are born with an innate capacity for word and language giving access to thinking and being, speaking and communicating, doing and accomplishing things in life. Naturally, the principal goal of communication is to sustain our lives by satisfying our needs. Rarely, however, do we think in those terms. We routinely and typically say something in the moment because there is something that would have us speak. For example, we ask a question, we express an opinion, we share news, or we communicate for any other number of explanations. And yet, there is always an underlying reason, purpose, or cause for communicating; we ask a question in our need to know, we express an opinion in our need to be acknowledged, we share news in our need to be heard, and so forth. In the final analysis, we communicate by means of our innate capacity for word and language to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires.

The Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication recognizes the basic, overall necessity to sustain our lives by satisfying our needs, wants, and desires. Accordingly, this theory is principally concerned with the primary goals of achieving effective expression and exchange for the purpose of advancing comprehension and understanding which are reached in time through seven sets of secondary goals. They are the goals of: one, creating attention and awareness; two, generating interest and involvement; three, advancing intelligence and insight; four, encouraging examination and evaluation; five, gaining agreement and acceptance; six, developing application and attainment; and seven, influencing adoption and advocacy. Arranged in a logical incremental progression, the secondary goals are designed to achieve effective and efficient expression and exchange while advancing mutual comprehension and understanding.

**EXPRESSION AND EXCHANGE**

Communication, in its most basic form, is merely expression and exchange. Expression is the declaration and depiction of thoughts and feelings, opinions and judgements, attitudes and values, perceptions and beliefs. Exchange is the conveyance and sharing of those thoughts and feelings. In our expression and exchange, we convey *and* share that which we declare and depict.

Typically in our expression and exchange, we want to achieve mutual comprehension and understanding for our expression and exchange so that we can fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires. However, we do not normally think of communication as a goal nor do we think of achieving comprehension and understanding as a goal either. We simply speak our needs, wants, and desires and expect or, at least, hope for results. And yet, how we communicate, how we relate, and how we create understanding is essential to how effective and efficient we are in fulfilling and satisfying those needs, wants, and desires.

By simply speaking our needs without acknowledging and setting communication goals for effective, efficient expression, exchange, and mutual understanding, communication is merely a way and means of articulating goals but not necessarily achieving them. Setting and achieving goals to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires requires us to also set communication goals to be effective and efficient and to achieve our intended outcomes. Accordingly, we set principle goals for doing or achieving some endeavor or for needing or wanting some outcome and we set goals for communication in support of achieving our principle goals.

As such we set communication goals with the intention of creating mutual understanding with others for reaching and realizing our principle goals of fulfilling and satisfying our needs, wants, and desires. How we communicate, create, and relate determines how we reach our principle goals in life.

To that purpose, we acknowledge two primary communication goals: first, the goal of achieving effective expression and exchange and, second, the goal of advancing comprehension and understanding for our principle goals in life. In reaching our two primary communication goals, we also acknowledge seven sets of secondary communication goals. In reaching these goals, we recognize the need for communication objectives, the strategies, tactics, and actions that contribute to the possibility of achieving each secondary goal. For example, in generating audience involvement, we may employ any number of different objectives including surveys, promotions, gifts, media prompts, calls to action, and so forth. Each secondary communication goal offers multiple opportunities for establishing strategies, tactics, and actions. In view of that, the Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication cannot reasonably provide a complete and comprehensive examination and discussion of communication objectives; they remain for the professional to plan, create, utilize, and manage.

1. GOALS OF ATTENTION AND AWARENESS

Achieving effective, efficient communication and mutual understanding begin first with creating an introduction and gaining the attention of an audience. No communication is possible without a beginning and no communication is possible without attention, without an audience being present, alert, and mindful to it. The first goal is to initiate a conversation and have the attention of its participants. How that is accomplished is a matter of communication objectives, a matter of strategies, tactics, and actions.

After creating introduction and gaining attention, the first goal works then to generate awareness for the subject, content, context, and communicator of the communication. The goal of awareness works to create opening visual and verbal message units and establish familiarity, recognition, meaning, and connection. No communication is possible without awareness, without audience notice, without an audience listening and observing.

2. GOALS OF INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT

Following introduction, attention, and awareness, the second goals work to generate interest by developing further message units and by creating importance and inquisitiveness in the communication. We advance interest by attracting and influencing an audience, by enhancing and increasing the meaning and relevance of the subject and its message units. No communication is possible without attraction and appeal, without generating interest and concern with an audience.

The second goals also work to generate involvement meaning the audience is actively participating in the communication. Audience involvement occurs in communication when we create meaningful and relevant connections by developing and enhancing the message units, by being in the listening of our audience. No communication is possible without attachment and active involvement. As the goals of interest and involvement work together, they advance expression, exchange, and mutual understanding.

3. GOALS OF INTELLIGENCE AND INSIGHT

Besides generating interest and involvement for effective and efficient communication, we require goals to advance audience knowledge and intelligence. No communication is possible without information, instruction, or data, without sharing and creating knowledge and intelligence. We advance audience intelligence with visual and verbal message units designed to inform, educate, promote, and motivate an audience in an effort to advance their comprehension and understanding.

Besides advancing intelligence, the third goals also work to enhance audience insight which involves their perceptions or, to be more precise, their opinions, judgements, viewpoints, and beliefs. Audience insight develops from communication content, context, and the communicator ultimately affecting the meaning and relevance an audience assigns to the communication. No communication is possible without the audience having some perspective and perception of it.

4. GOALS OF EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION

Following interest and involvement as well as intelligence and insight, the fourth goals work to encourage audience examination and evaluation of the communication, its meaning, relevance, and value. The goals encourage audience inquiry, inspection, exploration, examination, and analysis; they encourage testing and trialing so the audience can discover further meaning and relevance, and begin to see personal value for themselves. No communication is possible without audience meaning, relevance, and value.

The fourth goals also work to encourage audience assessment, judgement, and evaluation; they encourage rating and ranking again so they can discover further meaning and relevance, and value. By encouraging audience evaluation and feedback, we can begin to understand what the audience sees and hears in the communication. The goals also work to encourage audience assessment of what they like, trust, and believe in. No communication is possible without audience like, trust, and belief in the content and communicator.

5. GOALS OF AGREEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

Following examination and evaluation, the fifth goals work to gain agreement and acceptance. Simply stated, agreement is audience assent whereas acceptance is their consent. And while agreement is possible without

acceptance (we agree to something although we do not like it) and acceptance is possible without agreement (we accept something although we do not agree with it), both agreement and acceptance are required for optimal communication outcomes.

In gaining agreement, we affirm audience appreciation, preference, and partiality for the content of the communication and its meaning, relevance, and value; the audience likes what they see and hear. In gaining acceptance, we affirm audience appeal, approval, and permission for the communication; the audience trusts and believes what they see and hear. No optimal communication outcomes are possible without audience agreement and acceptance, preference and permission, without audience like, trust, and belief.

6. GOALS OF APPLICATION AND ATTAINMENT

With audience agreement and acceptance, the sixth goals focus on audience application or use of the subject conveyed in the communication. They also focus on audience attainment or reuse and preference. Stated in other words, application and attainment goals help the audience create a strong connection with the subject of the communication for its meaning, relevance, and value; accordingly, the audience claims relationship and asserts preference. No optimal communication outcomes are possible without application and attainment.

Application means the audience *intentionally* and *purposefully* uses and reuses the subject conveyed in the communication for their benefit and advantage. Attainment means the audience *consistently* and *continuously* reuses and prefers the subject for its delivered value. For example, a communication encourages an audience to use a product or service: the audience trials and evaluates it; determines its meaning, relevance, and value; uses and reuses it based on its features, benefits, and value; and establishes preference for that product or service.

7. GOALS OF ADOPTION AND ADVOCACY

Finally, following application and attainment, the seventh goals work to influence adoption and advocacy. The audience not only likes, trusts, and believes in the communication subject, content, context, and communicator. The audience comprehends and understands the subject and appreciates its meaning, relevance, and value. Moreover, the audience develops optimal perspectives, perceptions, and preferences for the communication subject, experience, effect, and outcomes.

In view of this, adoption means the audience integrates or incorporates the communication subject into their life because it is so meaningful, relevant, and valuable. Adoption then involves passionate agreement, acceptance, and preference which often bring about advocacy. Audience advocacy is their support, activism, promotion, and championship. In their backing, the audience communicates their like, trust, and belief in the communication subject and the meaning, relevance, and value it personally has for them. Although optimal communication outcomes are possible without adoption and advocacy, achieving these goals further advances relationships and fulfills and satisfies our needs, wants, and desires.

BENEFITS AND VALUE

In summary, the Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication begin with the primary goal of creating efficient and effective expression and exchange to establish mutual comprehension and understanding in order to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires. In pursuit of achieving effective and efficient

communication, there are seven sets of secondary goals in a logical incremental progression from creating introduction and awareness, interest and involvement, intelligence and insight to examination and evaluation, agreement and acceptance, application and attainment, and adoption and advocacy. Together, these goals contribute to communication effectiveness and efficiency; these goals contribute to understanding and being understood; and, these goals contribute to the principle goals we have for fulfilling on and satisfying our needs, wants, and desires whether we intentionally or unintentionally set goals for our wants and needs, whether we are conscious or unconscious of achieving them as principle goals.

Although all communication has its beginning with introduction, communication progresses with awareness and attention and it progresses even further with interest and involvement. Should there be a lapse in communication, however, it may require a reintroduction to resume awareness and attention and to reestablish interest and involvement. Whatever the subject or content, communication requires involvement on various levels depending on the meaning, relevance, and value of the communication for the audience as well as the communicator. In view of that, the most basic levels of involvement are listening and really hearing, observing and really seeing, along with comprehension and really understanding. Also, basic involvement usually requires some form of response or reaction, some form of acknowledgement and feedback (see the Theory and Practice of the Fundamentals of Communication).

All communication generates information and data established in the subject, content, and context of the communication. All communication also generates information and data established in the manner or style of expression and exchange seen and heard in the communicator and audience, experienced by the other. Arising in their interest and involvement, communication information and data, established in the subject, content, context, communicator, and audience, contribute then to audience intelligence and insight, knowledge and perception. The audience examines and evaluates the information and data which they comprehend and understand; they discern and judge it; and, they form opinions, viewpoints, and beliefs about it. Based on their judgements and opinions, the audience either agrees or disagrees with the information and data; based on their judgements and opinions, they either accept or don't accept it.

Audience perspectives, perceptions, and preferences influence their connection with the communication subject and its meaning, relevance, and value. Audience perspectives, perceptions, and preferences also influence their relationship and sense of possession. As stated, application means the audience intentionally uses the subject conveyed in the communication for their benefit and advantage while attainment means the audience continuously reuses and prefers the subject of the communication.

Finally, audience adoption and advocacy describe, first, the passionate agreement and acceptance, integration and preference, of the communication subject; and second, the fervent support, promotion, and activism for the same grounded in liking, trusting, and believing in the communication subject and its meaning relevance, and value. Advocacy promotes progress, development, and growth for people, thoughts, and things founded in like, trust, and belief. In summary, the Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication provide the communicator and audience greater awareness and appreciation for achieving communication effectiveness and efficiency for reaching comprehension and understanding so that our needs, wants, and desires in life can be attained.

OVERVIEW MAP

Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication

1. Principle Life Goals

- A. Sustain Life
- B. Fulfill on and Satisfy Our Needs, Wants, and Desires

2. Primary Communication Goals

- A. Effective and Efficient Expression and Exchange
 - Listening and Really Hearing Others
 - Observing and Really Seeing Others
- B. Mutual Comprehension and Understanding
 - For Needs, Wants, and Desires

3. Secondary Communication Goals

A. Attention and Awareness

Introduction for

- Opening and Beginning

Attention for

- Presence, Alertness, and Mindfulness

Awareness for

- Recognition, Familiarity, and Connection

B. Interest and Involvement

Interest for

- Inquisitiveness, Attraction, and Influence

Involvement for

- Participation, Connection, and Attachment

C. Intelligence and Insight

Intelligence for

- Knowledge, Information, and Data

Insight for

- Perspective, Perception, and Preference
- Meaning Relevance, and Value

D. Exploration and Evaluation

Exploration for

- Inquiry, Trial, and Testing

Evaluation for

- Assessment, Analysis, and Discovery

E. Agreement and Acceptance

Agreement for

- Assent, Appreciation, and Preference

Acceptance for

- Consent, Approval, and Permission
- Like, Trust, and Belief

F. Application and Attachment

Application for

- Use, Benefit, and Advantage

Attainment for

- Reuse, Preference, and Possession
- Meaning, Relevance, and Value
- Needs, Wants, and Desires

G. Adoption and Advocacy

Adoption for

- Integration, Incorporation, and Ownership
- Perspective, Perception, and Preference
- Meaning, Relevance, and Value
- Like, Trust, and Belief

Advocacy for

- Support, Activism, and Promotion
- Development, Progress, and Growth