

COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE



Theory and Practice of the Characteristics 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 Characteristics of Communication is ninth in a series.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION

In our inherent capacity for word and language and our instinct for gesture and depiction, communication is created in our thoughts and feelings, opinions and judgements, perceptions and beliefs, attitudes and values, concepts and ideas, recollections and memories. As such, our expression and exchange invariably comprise some of the characteristics, qualities, and attributes created in our thinking, feeling, believing, and judging that influence and contribute to the context and content of our messages and their meanings. In view of this, the characteristics, qualities, and attributes that are distinguishable in our communication are products of our thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs which support and sustain the context of messages, foster and enhance the situation and setting of the communication. What's more, the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of our communication often initiate and create the substance and subject of the communication. We think of something, we have feelings about something, we believe in something, and so we express it.

Hardly ever do we think about the qualities or attributes of expression and exchange. Rarely do we mull over communication characteristics; they are simply, normally, and naturally in the content of the message; they are the essence of our expression. However, when we examine the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of communication we see their influential, decisive role in context *and* content. For example, in a communication expressing some joyful event or some fortune or gain, the context is sensed and perceived through characteristics of happiness, bliss, pleasure, and glee; the content is comprehended and understood in the details of the event as celebration, merriment, and more. Take another example: in a communication expressing a religious belief, the context is sensed and perceived through characteristics of faith, conviction, and trust; the content is comprehended and understood in the details of the spiritual and sacred certainty and belief affecting our understanding of a deity and divinity.

The Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication distinguish intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical characteristics which are established in the mind; the theory also distinguishes relational and physical characteristics which are established in our occurring world. As such, we characterize communications as intellectual and emotional communications as well as spiritual and ethical communications. We also characterize communications as relational (or social) communications since they create connections, associations, relationships, and friendships with others; and, we characterize communications as physical communications when they can be listened and heard, observed and seen, sensed and felt, smelled and tasted in all their physicality. Moreover, we characterize communications as physical communications when they involve technologies and tools used to communicate, when they involve print, electronic, alternate, and personal media such as books and brochures, internet and apps, t-shirts and hats, and more.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

In our examination of the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of communication, we realize most communication is physical communication; that is to say, all external communication between and among people is physical in nature. In contrast to external communication, we also realize internal communication (thinking and communicating with our self) is not physical but intellectual since our thoughts and messages remain within our mind. While much of the communication we create with others is external, we regularly and frequently communicate with our self internally and, as such, that communication is intellectual in nature. To be clear then, all thoughts for communication begin in the brain as intellectual activities of the mind; as a result, all communication reflects some intellectual characteristics, qualities, or attributes in its creation. Then, as we communicate with others externally, as we express our thoughts and feelings and move them from the intellectual world to the physical world, that communication naturally and normally gains physical characteristics. Then, as we convey our thoughts and feelings, our communication takes on one or more additional, usually more prominent, characteristics, relevant to and reflective of our intention, like emotional, spiritual, ethical, and relational qualities and attributes.

Whether we think, plan, and create messages and meanings to speak or we merely speak without thinking, so to speak, all communication begins as internal, intellectual activity. All communication requires the intellect for conveying information and all communication requires the intellect for interpreting and understanding information. And because all communication has some intellectual characteristics in its conveyance and interpretation; messages and meanings - in addition to intellectual and physical characteristics, qualities, or attributes - gain other characteristics apropos to the intent and content of that communication. For example, a communication expressing a matter of morality requires the intellect to encode and transmit, receive and decode the message. Besides intellectual and physical characteristics, the foremost characteristics of this communication involve those that represent ethics and morals, principles and ideologies, and codes of behavior.

Summing this up, all communications have intellectual characteristics, most communications have physical characteristics, and some communications have other, multiple characteristics. Thus, all communications have multiple characteristics: one or two predominant qualities (relevant to the intent and content of the communication) plus one or two lesser qualities, and perhaps a trace or two of other qualities. We rarely think about the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of communication let alone multiple ones except when we spontaneously sense, perceive, and interpret them in the context and content of messages and their meanings.

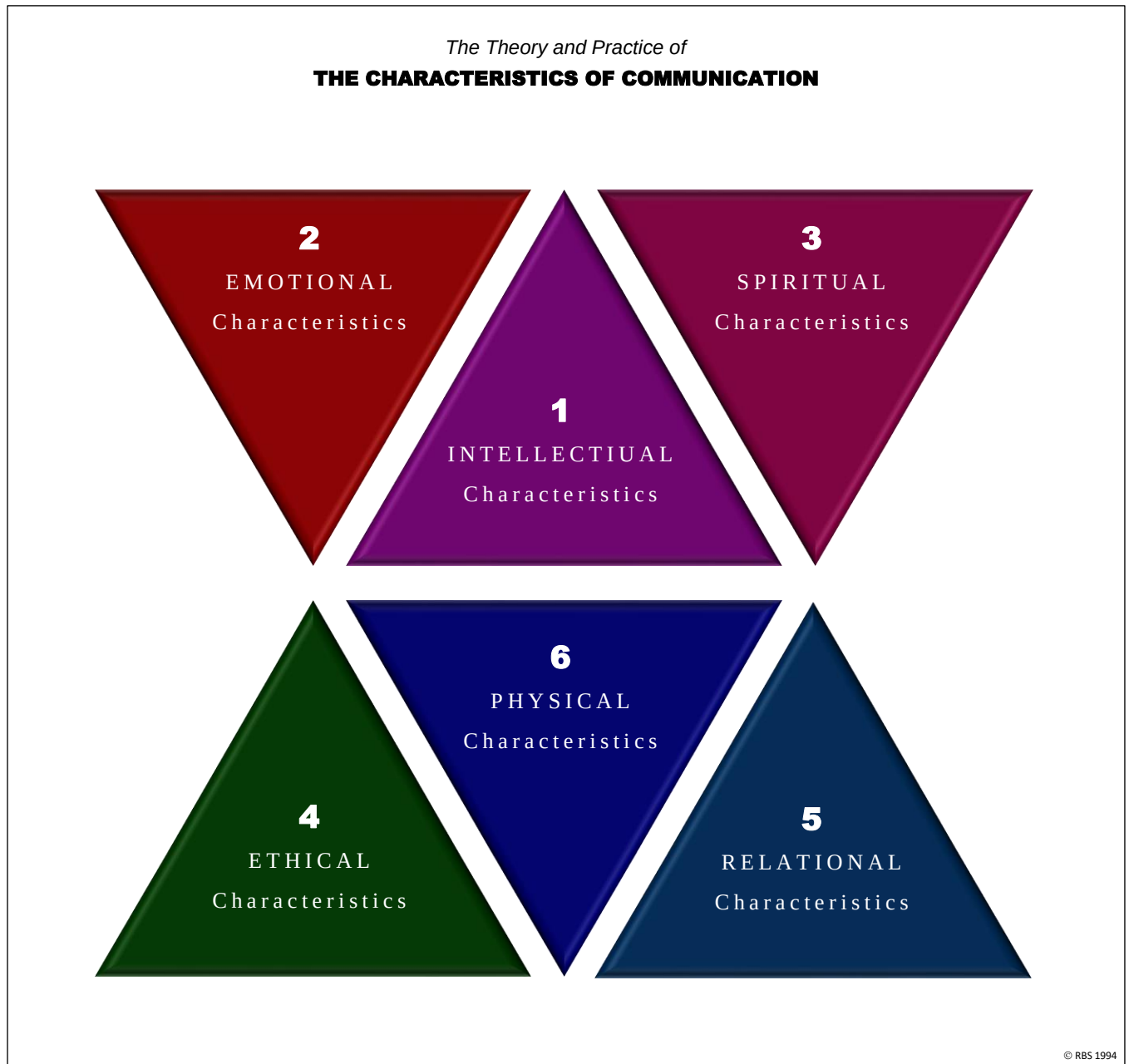
OCCURRENCE AND ABSENCE OF CHARACTERISTICS

Whether we think about them or not, characteristics, qualities, and attributes create and contribute to message context and content; they drive our expression and exchange. When communication characteristics occur inconsistently, incongruently, or incompatibly with the context and content either intentionally or unintentionally, messages and their meanings deteriorate and disappoint. Moreover, audience agreement and acceptance for the communication diminishes when characteristics are incongruent and thus their listening, observation, and participation decreases as well. In addition, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, messages, and meanings deteriorates and, if there was meaning, relevance, and value for the audience in the messages and their meanings, that would drop off or discontinue as well. Consistent, congruent, and compatible characteristics are indispensable to perception and interpretation; they influence comprehension and understanding, interest and involvement. We appreciate the fact that consistent, congruent, and compatible characteristics are essential to achieving effective, efficient communication.

When communication characteristics are instinctively expected and yet they are missing, messages and meanings also deteriorate and disappoint. Missing characteristics, qualities, and attributes occur in their absence when we most anticipate them, when we certainly expect them within the context and content of a communication. For example, a conversation that laments a personal loss normally and naturally depicts emotional characteristics of grief, sorrow, and sadness and yet when we anticipate them but they are missing, the characteristics are inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible with the context and content. Absent characteristics like inconsistent, incongruent, and incompatible characteristics influence messages and meanings as well as audience like, trust, and belief. Again, we hardly think about the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of communications except when we sense and perceive they are missing from communication.

Although each category distinguishes the occurrence of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, ethical, relational, and physical characteristics in communication, each category also distinguishes their opposites. When we think of intellectual characteristics, for example, we distinguish smart, logical, and rational communications. And yet we also know we communicate foolishly, irrationally, and illogically. Consider ethical characteristics as another example; we think of honest, principled communications and, in spite of them, we also know we communicate at times without integrity. Accordingly, each category distinguishes the occurrence of characteristics in communication as well as their opposites, absences, and inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible use.

The Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication work in parallel with the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication (intent, content, audience, method, presence, and delivery) and the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication (clarity, dynamics, distinction, and integrity). These three theories and their constituent parts form the mechanism of communication for creating useful, successful expression and exchange. Communication characteristics, components, and conditions are interdependent, mutually reinforcing theories and practices that advance the performance and productivity of communication creating value and optimal outcomes. Seldom, if ever, do we think of communication as having a mechanism of action nor do we think of communication as having characteristics, components, and conditions of expression and exchange. And yet, in acknowledging them, in understanding their features, functions, benefits, and delivered value, and in putting them into practice, we appreciate the mechanism of communication for achieving quality communication.



INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Intellectual Characteristics in communications involve rational, logical, reasonable, and knowledgeable information. In fact, all communication begins in the mind; it requires the intellect for conveying information and for interpreting and understanding information. When we think of intellectual characteristics we often think of that which is smart and clever, sensible and practical, intelligent and wise. On the contrary, intellectual characteristics involve good thinking and bad thinking, right thinking and wrong thinking. In view of that, intellectual characteristics involve that which is also stupid and foolish, ignorant and impractical, thoughtless and idiotic. Intellectual characteristics in communication refer to matters of thinking rather than feeling and, as such, intellectual characteristics include that which is smart and stupid, that which is knowledge and ignorance. Messages and meanings directly or indirectly depict that which are good and right thoughts as well as that which are bad and wrong thoughts, bad not in the sense of immoral but in the sense of defective, faulty, and

imperfect. All messages and their meanings depend on the intellect to sense, perceive, and interpret them; and, they depend on the intellectual characteristics which influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and possibly audience like, belief, and trust in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Intellectual characteristics, the inverse of intellectual characteristics, and the absence of intellectual characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding, of messages and meanings.

EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Emotional Characteristics in communications involve emotions and feelings. As sensations and perceptions, we distinguish emotions from feelings in three important ways. First, we distinguish two basic, inherent emotions; they are love and fear. Arising out of love and fear, we experience our many different feelings in life. For example, feelings of happiness, joy, contentment, pleasure, and more arise out of love; feelings of anger, anxiety, hatred, animosity, worry, disgust, contempt, and more arise out of fear. Some feelings arise out of both love and fear; for example, sadness can arise out of the loss of love and it can also arise out of fear for the future. Second, we distinguish emotions of love and fear as continuous conditions of existence in our background of being unlike feelings which are triggered in our day-to-day, hour-to-hour experiences of living. For example, if we are in a state of love, feelings of joyfulness arise in instances that might otherwise produce feelings of annoyance or resentment; or, if we are in a state of fear, feelings of worry arise in instances of uncertainty that might otherwise result in excitement. Third, we distinguish emotions from feelings in that feelings are temporary and subside over time. On the other hand, however, emotions of love and fear are enduring. As background of being, emotions are inherent in our existence although they can advance, grow, develop, and change over time. As human beings, we live in love or the lack of love; we operate in fear or the lack of fear. Every feeling we experience is a transient expression of an emotion. As such, emotions are internally grounded while feelings are externally expressed.

Although professional psychological organizations recognize joy, anger, surprise, disgust, sadness, fear, and contempt as basic emotions, what is notably missing is love, the most basic of emotions; everything in life is in the presence or absence of love. And although we correctly think the opposite of love is hate, hate actually occurs inside of fear; it occurs in the absence of love. We can appreciate that which are called basic emotions as truly basic feelings and that basic feelings arise out of love and fear. We recognize joy and sadness as products of love and we also recognize anger, contempt, surprise, sadness, and disgust as products of fear.

Messages and meanings intentionally or unintentionally depict emotions; that which are expressed in love and fear. Messages and meanings also depict emotionally-based feelings. Feelings in communications are conscious experiences often interwoven with spiritual characteristics including moods, temperaments, dispositions, and attitudes. Accordingly, feelings as well as moods, temperaments, dispositions, and attitudes in messages and meanings depend on emotional characteristics which, in turn, influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and, perhaps more importantly, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Emotional characteristics, the inverse of emotional characteristics (fear rather than love or love rather than fear), and the absence of emotional characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding, of messages and meanings.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Spiritual Characteristics in communications involve individual moods, temperaments, dispositions, and attitudes as well as individual personality, soul, and depth; the spiritualness of living and being. Spiritual characteristics in communication also involve religious aspects; they involve faith, conviction, and belief in God as Creator and Supreme Being; God as Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence. With spiritual characteristics, we distinguish spiritual from religious: spiritual refers to the nature of the inner self whereas religious refers to the nature of the belief in that which is holy and heavenly, sacred and saintly. Messages and meanings depict that which is about being high-spirited, lively, and vigorous. In a different manner, messages and meanings also depict that which is devout; that which involves deity and divinity. As such, messages and meanings might depend on spiritual or religious characteristics which, in turn, influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and, perhaps more importantly, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Spiritual characteristics, the inverse of spiritual characteristics (that which is not divine) and the absence of spiritual characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding, of messages and meanings.

ETHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Ethical Characteristics in communications involve principles, beliefs, ideologies, and values. Ethics refers to cultural rules of conduct; what society declares as dos and don'ts; what society says is right or wrong, good or bad. Morals, on the other hand, refers to personal codes of conduct; what we as individuals declare as dos and don'ts; what we as individuals say is right or wrong, good or bad. As such, ethics are external standards in community settings and morals are internal standards in our individualism. Ethical and moral characteristics contribute equally to communications. Messages and meanings overtly or covertly, directly or indirectly depict that which is right and wrong, good and bad, true and false, positive and negative. Ethical characteristics also involve integrity. When we think of integrity, we often think of that which is ethical and moral; that which is right and wrong, good and bad. Integrity is also an issue of truth and honesty, accuracy and reliability, authenticity and sincerity. Besides being an important part of the characteristics of communication, integrity is essential to the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication. Accordingly, the integrity, reliability, and veracity of messages and meanings are influenced by ethical characteristics which, in turn, influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and, perhaps more importantly, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Ethical characteristics, the inverse of ethical characteristics, and the absence of ethical characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding, of messages and meanings.

RELATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Relational Characteristics in communications involve being respected, related, and relevant. Relational characteristics depict collaborative, societal conditions between and among individuals and communities. As such, relational characteristics distinguish independence and dependence, individualism and reliance, having no relations and having relations. Relational characteristics also distinguish interdependence as mutual reliance of individuals on other individuals, mutual reliance of communities on other communities. In view of that, our dependence on others generates relationships and communities; stated another way, dependence creates conditions of common unity. Creating backgrounds of relatedness through relational communication characteristics bring about acquaintances and associations which require awareness and knowledge of others. It

also brings about connections and relationships which require mutual understanding and deeper appreciation of others. The Theory and Practice of the Palette of Conversations offers more information regarding conversations of relation which are naturally and normally created with relational characteristics. Many messages and meanings typically depend on relational characteristics which influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and, more importantly, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Relational characteristics, the inverse of relational characteristics, and the absence of relational characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding of messages and meanings.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Characteristics in communications involve the physical occurrence of communication; that is listening and hearing, observing and seeing, sensing and feeling, smelling and tasting as means of sensing, perceiving, and interpreting messages and their meanings. Physical characteristics in communications also involve languages of conveyance. We appreciate the physical properties of expression and exchange, the physicality of external communications in contrast with the intellectual properties of internal communication. As we know, most communication occurs in the physical world as interaction between and among people; it requires the visual, verbal, tactile, and other sensorial forms of expression for conveying information and interpreting and understanding information.

When we think of physical characteristics in communication, however, we do not think about the physical occurrence and its sensorial forms of expression and yet they influence communication effectiveness and efficiency. Rather, when we think of physical characteristics we often think of media: the physical technology and tools we use to add emphasis to communication and to enhance, expand, and extend our ability to communicate.

First, media allows us to add emphasis to communication for greater comprehension and understanding with the addition of visual messages in various shapes, sizes, colors, patterns, textures, and more or with the addition of verbal messages in various sounds, noises, loudness, length, and more. Media allows us to add emphasis to communication with fragrances and flavors and feelings as well. Second, media allows us to enhance our communication with technologies and tools to be encode and transmit messages, to receive and decode messages, and to be creative with our messages using programs, apps, automation, special effects, and more. Media also allows us to enhance our relationships through communication using technologies and tools. In other words, media connects us to others; media creates channels of communication for us to associate and relate with other people.

Third, media allows us to expand our communication giving us greater reach, more audiences, more eyes and ears. In expanding our reach, media provides the means of transmitting to more people and reaching more people as well as creating more interactivity. As such, media reduces the distance between communicator and audience; it also reduces the time it takes to communicate between communicator and audience which brings us to the next topic. Fourth, media allows us to extend our communication over time giving us greater frequency, more instances to communicate, more ability to be consistent and constant with messages. Recorded and archived communications require media for communicating that which is in the past and that

which we want to convey in the future. As such, media allows us to extend the life of a communication past, present, and future. So when we think of physical characteristics in communication, we correctly think of media. Media is tangible and measurable; once it is recorded or archived, media is consistent, reproducible, and, to some extent, permanent.

We distinguish media into four groups as presented in the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication, in particular, the Delivery Components. The first grouping is print media: visual messages which are written or printed on paper or other substrate like books, newspapers, magazines, brochures, billboards, and signs and more. The second grouping is electronic media: visual messages which are projected on a screen along with audio messages which are played through a speaker involving internet communications on computers and cell phones, programs on televisions and radios, games and movies, and more. The third grouping is alternate media: visual, audio, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory messages which are in a physical form not ordinarily considered as media or communications but they communicate nonetheless such as food, scents, natural and manmade objects including clothing, accessories, imagebuilders, and premiums as well as sticks, stones, frying pans, and other weapons, and more. The fourth grouping is personal media: the use of others as spokespeople, representatives, advocates, models, and more who create audio and visual messages like promotions and testimonials as well as visual demonstrations and depictions.

One additional point regarding media: it is generally recognized in communication by many that the medium is the message. The physical characteristics of media whether, it is print or electronic devices or other means, significantly influence the context, content, and meaning. In view of that, a text message creates different qualities, attributes, and characteristics in contrast to a letter, or an email, or a voicemail, or a video. Consider for a moment alternate forms of media: sticks and stones in contrast to guns and knives; different forms of media create different context, content, and meanings; each medium having the same ability to convey injury. Here, *the medium is the message*. Speaking of alternate forms of media and in addition to the Components of Communication, the Theory and Practice of the Languages of Conveyance distinguishes various forms of conveyance and the use of objects like sticks and stones as media to communicate touch, feel, and contact.

As we can appreciate, many messages and meanings typically depend on physical characteristics which influence communication effectiveness and efficiency and, more importantly, audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator, the communication, and the communication's overall delivered value. Physical characteristics, the inverse of physical characteristics, and the absence of physical characteristics contribute to the perception and interpretation, comprehension and understanding of messages and meanings.

BENEFITS AND VALUE

The Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication contribute, about one-third, to the mechanism of communication, a system of interdependent, mutually reinforcing characteristics, components, and conditions that work together for expression and exchange. The characteristics of communication include intellectual and emotional characteristics, spiritual and ethical characteristics, and relational and physical characteristics. A second-third of the mechanism of communication, the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication, involve communication intent and content, communication audience and method, and communication presence and delivery. A third-third of the mechanism of communication, the

Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication, incorporate clarity, dynamics, distinction, and integrity into messages and meanings. All three sets of theories, and their characteristics, components, and conditions, work to establish effective, efficient communication for creating meaning, relevance, and value as well as quality optimal outcomes.

In summary, Intellectual Characteristics in communication involves rational, logical, reasonable, and knowledgeable thinking distinguished from emotions, sentiments, passions, and feelings. As such, intellectual qualities, attributes, and characteristics in communication point to that which is smart and clever, sensible and practical, intelligent and wise. And yet intellectual characteristics must also involve that which is irrational. Illogical, unreasonable, and ignorant as these are forms of thinking as well and not feelings. In view of this, intellectual qualities and attributes in communication also naturally include that which is foolish and stupid, unknowing and impractical, thoughtless and idiotic. Besides the rational and irrational, the logical and illogical, intellectual characteristics must also involve the absence of both especially if one expects to perceive their presence in the communication as they also involve inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible characteristics relative to message content and meaning.

As mentioned previously, whether we think, plan, and create messages and meanings to speak or we merely speak without thinking, all communication begins as intellectual activity. For that reason, communication requires the intellect for encoding and conveying information in the same manner communication requires the intellect for receiving and decoding information, interpreting and understanding it. Communication is a matter of intellects interacting with intellects and because of that, all communications consequently have some intellectual characteristics, qualities, or attributes as a basis for expression and exchange. Those characteristics are encompassed in our thoughts and feelings, opinions and judgements, perceptions and beliefs, attitudes and values, concepts and ideas, recollections and memories.

Emotional Characteristics in communication distinguish emotions from feelings. We distinguish two basic, inherent emotions of love and fear; arising out of love and fear, we experience our many different feelings in life from happiness, joy, contentment, pleasure, and more to anger, anxiety, hatred, animosity, worry, and more. We also distinguish emotions as continuous conditions of existence in our background of being unlike feelings which are triggered in our daily experiences of living. As such, feelings are temporary and subside over time whereas emotions of love and fear are enduring and intrinsic to being. In our life, we live in love or the lack of love and we operate in fear or the lack of fear as these two emotions develop, grow, and change over time. Like intellectual characteristics, emotional characteristics also involve the absence of emotions and feelings as well as the use of inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible emotions and feelings relative to message content and meaning.

Spiritual Characteristics in communication distinguish the essence and soul, life force and inner self, of the individual along with the moods, dispositions, temperament, and attitudes of the individual. We distinguish these spiritual characteristics from other spiritual characteristics of the religious. As such, spiritual characteristics of faith, conviction, and belief in a deity and the divine depict religiousness. As such, spiritual characteristics embody that which is holy and heavenly, sacred and saintly. They represent God as Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence; as Creator, Light, and Supreme Being. The inverse of spiritual essence and

soul is a bleak, inexpressive void in being, characterless and gray, in one sense. The inverse of spiritual faith and religion, in the other sense, is the other dark force, the qualities or attributes of an evil spirit, demon, or devil and its works. As a reminder, the absence or the inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible use of spiritual characteristics in communications relative to message content and meaning are also part of this category.

Ethical Characteristics in communication distinguish ethics from morals although both are qualities, attributes, and characteristics of communication. With ethics as cultural rules of conduct and morals as personal rules of conduct, both ethics and morals are principles and standards, values and beliefs, ideologies and philosophies we live within communally and individually. Consequently, messages and their meanings can have qualities of good or bad, right or wrong; messages and their meanings can also have qualities of positivity and negativity, truth or illusion. Continuing along that line of thought, ethical characteristics clearly involve integrity. Besides ethics and morals, integrity involves that which is truth and honesty, accuracy and reliability, authenticity and sincerity, and because it does, integrity in communications greatly influences its effectiveness and efficiency; and, it greatly influences audience like, trust, and belief in the communicator and the communication as well. The Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication further define the critical role of integrity in expression and exchange. Like the other preceding characteristics, ethical characteristics involve the absence of ethics and morals when they are expected as well as the inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible use of ethics and morals relative to message content and meaning. For example, what may seem true in a message may actually be illusion because some sensed or perceived inauthenticity in the context, content, or communicator.

Relational Characteristics in communication depict social and communal qualities, attributes, and characteristics in communication as well as individualism and autonomy. Principally speaking, relational characteristics depict qualities that engender backgrounds of relatedness for creating acquaintances and associations, connections and relationships between and among people. Relational characteristics define the individual relative to their independence and dependence; and, relational characteristics define the community relative to their dependence and interdependence. Besides their absence in communication, relational characteristics also work inversely in that they do not produce relatedness but engender backgrounds of difference and separateness. In addition, relational characteristics are sometimes inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible with the context, content, and communicator which subsequently shape the message and its meaning which then influences connections, associations, and relations, and friendships.

Physical Characteristics in communication distinguish the qualities and attributes associated with the physical occurrence of communication, namely that which is spoken and depicted, observed and heard, sensed and felt, smelled and tasted, from the qualities and attributes associated with the use of technologies and tools and other media. As we well know, there are also physical characteristics in communication with the use of media. We use media, technologies, and tools to emphasize our communication; for example, we might use media to emphasize message content visually like charts, signs, billboards, or printed handouts, all to advance the comprehension and understanding of what we are conveying. Or, for example, we might use media to emphasize message content aurally like voice recordings, music selections, unusual noises and sounds, and so forth. We could also use media to emphasize content with tactile, gustatory, or olfactory props.

Besides using media for emphasis, we use it to enhance our ability to communicate; for example we use technologies and tools to encode and decode messages and, in a like manner, we use technologies and tools to transmit and receive messages. What's more we use technologies and tools to be creative with our programming and automation as well as the use of special effects and more. We use media and apps to enhance our communication so that we can enhance our connections and relationships; we have various channels of social and business communications with which we use.

Another way we use media is to expand our ability to communicate; we use media to achieve greater reach and greater interactivity. For example, media gives us access to homes to advertise; media gives us instant access to individuals through cellphones; and media gives us direct admittance to movies and entertainment. Media creates gateways to more people, more eyes, and more ears than individual or group conversations can ever match. With our easy access to people, media reduces the time it takes to communicate and it reduces the space between communicator and audience. Think of the proliferation of voice and video connections and conferencing made daily. Media removes the barriers of distance and time for immediate, real-time communication.

In addition to expanding our ability, media also allows us to extend our communication ability. We use media for greater frequency and we use it to extend the life of communications. Media removes the barriers of time again but in another sense; it creates more instances to communicate as noted plus it creates opportunities to be more consistent and constant, more reliable and repetitive. For example, media gives us continuous advertising; media gives us reminders and prompts; media gives us easier, quicker ways of communicating in voice and video. Along with these extended abilities, media also gives us the ability to record messages for future use and it gives us the ability to archive messages of the past for future use. It allows the past to be present immediately and it allows us to create a future.

Physical characteristics are also concerned with the absence of media when it is expected but is missing and when physical characteristics and media are inconsistent, incongruent, or incompatible relative to message content and meaning; for example, the use of insensitive, ill-chosen, and offensive media which do not enhance, expand, or extend our ability to communicate and create greater comprehension and understanding.

One final point regarding physical characteristics: most communications are external since they involve expression and exchange between or among people. As such, expression and exchange potentially present countless physical characteristics, qualities, and attributes different and particular to the communicator, the communication, and the audience. Combined with physical and intellectual characteristics are other characteristics as presented in this theory. All of these qualities and attributes in various blends and forms can make messages very difficult or very easy to interpret and understand depending on their judicious use.

In the end, the overall intention of the Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication is to create awareness for their profound influence on expression and exchange and, along with the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication and the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication, the intention is also to advance the mechanism of communication, create effective and efficient communications, and achieve quality optimal outcomes.

OVERVIEW MAP

Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication

1. Intellectual Characteristics

- A. Rational, Logical, Reasonable, and Knowledgeable
 - Smart and Clever
 - Sensible and Practical
 - Intelligent and Wise
- B. Irrational, Illogical, Unreasonable, and Ignorant
 - Stupid and Foolish
 - Ignorant and Impractical
 - Thoughtless and Idiotic
- C. Absence of Intellectual Qualities and Attributes

2. Emotional Characteristics

- A. Emotions
 - Love and Fear
- B. Feelings
 - Anger, Annoyance, Cheerfulness, and Distress
 - Enthusiasm, Happiness, Grief, Guilt, and Hopefulness
 - Regret, Sadness, Shamefulness, Upset, and Worry
- C. Absence of Emotional Qualities and Attributes

3. Spiritual Characteristics

- A. Spiritual
 - Soul, Essence, Life Force, and Inner Self
 - Disposition, Attitude, Temperament, and Nature
- B. Religious
 - Holy, Saintly, Sacred, Heavenly, and Devout
 - Faith, Conviction, and Belief in Divinity and Deity
 - God as Supreme Being, Creator, and Object of Faith
 - God as Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence
- C. Absence of Spiritual Qualities and Attributes

4. Ethical Characteristics

- A. Ethical / Moral
 - Ethical as Cultural Rules of Conduct
 - Moral as Personal Rules of Conduct
- B. Principles, Values, Beliefs, Standards, and Ideologies
 - Right or Wrong, Good or Bad
 - True or False, Positive or Negative
- C. Absence of Ethical Qualities and Attributes

5. Relational Characteristics

- A. Relational / Social
 - Independence, Interdependence, and Dependence
 - Individual and Community
- B. Relatedness
 - Acquaintances and Associations
 - Connections and Relationships
- C. Absence of Relational Qualities and Attributes

6. Physical Characteristics

- A. Physical Occurrence
 - Listened and Heard, Observed and Seen
 - Sensed and Felt, Smelled and Tasted
- B. Physical Media
 - Add Emphasis to Communication
 - Using Other Audible, Visible, Tactile Languages
 - Using Other Gustatory, Olfactory, and Sensory Languages
 - Enhances the Ability to Communicate
 - Technology to Transmit and Receive, Encode and Decode
 - Tools, Programs, Automation, Special Effects to Be Creative
 - Technology to Enhance Relationships
 - Channels of Communication to Associate and Relate
 - Expands the Ability to Communicate
 - Greater Reach with Less Distance and Less Time to Communicate
 - More Interactivity, More Audiences, More Eyes and Ears
 - Extends the Ability to Communicate
 - Greater Frequency, Extends the life of the Communication
 - More Instances to Communicate and Be Consistent and Constant
 - Recorded and Archived Messages
 - Allows the Past to Be Present and to Communicate in the Future
- C. Four Groups of Media
 - Print Media
 - Visual Messages Written or Printed
 - Electronic Media
 - Visual and Audio Messages Projected and Played
 - Alternate Media
 - Visual, Audio, Tactile, Olfactory, Gustatory in Physical Form
 - Personal Media
 - People as Spokespeople, Reps, Advocates, Models, etc.
- D. Absence of Physical Qualities and Attributes