

Negative messages with positive emphasis

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Why should we communicate negative messages with positive emphasis?

- People are self-centered.
- People are defensive.
- People are not perfect.
- People need specific goals.
- People expect courtesy.
- People need to feel appreciated for their efforts.
- People do the best they can

The You-Attitude = Receiver-Centered

- We shipped your order today.
- Your order will arrive on Thursday.
- You will receive your order on Thursday

Avoid starting messages with "I" or "We."

- I am happy to inform you that we have approved your loan.
- Congratulations! Your loan is approved.

The You-Attitude emphasizes reader benefit

- Your donation will provide temporary housing for 100 women who don't want to return to abusive households.

The You Attitude is positive

Focus on the what can be done

- Writing is not my best subject.
- Accounting is my best subject.

When a negative is necessary, use the
least negative, most tactful term

- Because you failed to pay your bill, your account is delinquent.
- Your account is past due.

Focus on options that remain

- You cannot get a loan because you owe so much on your credit cards.
- You can get a loan if someone co-signs the loan with you.

Bury the negative and present it compactly.

- You cannot use your Cop-ez card unless you find a copy machine that accepts Cop-ez cards. The main library and some classroom buildings have these machines, but the following buildings do not accept Cop-ez cards: Wendell Phillips Hall, Covell Commons, and Knoles Hall.
- You can use your Cop-ez card in any machine that accepts the card. You will find these machines in some classroom buildings and in the main library.

Avoid "you" when it criticizes the reader

- You failed to sign your check.
- Your check arrived without a signature.
- Your check was not signed.
- Please stop by today to sign your check.

Avoid "you" when it limits the reader's freedom

- You must get approval from the Director.
- All personnel must get approval from the Director.

Avoid calling your readers stupid

- If you had read the instruction booklet

Avoid suggesting that they are lying

- You claim that you returned the item.
- According to you, the item stopped working.

Avoid indicating that they are complainers

- You complain that.....

Avoid blaming them

- Obviously you overlooked...
- You forgot to
- You failed to
- You neglected to...

Avoid issuing ultimatums

- This will be the last memo sent on this subject. Anyone dressing inappropriately faces immediate disciplinary action! – AND – either comply with the regulations or face the consequences!

Tips for effective positive communication

- Problem oriented not person oriented
- Mismatch between what one feels/thinks and what one says
 - *“I’m disappointed that we didn’t reach our target and that we aren’t getting our bonuses.”*
- *Avoid sentences beginning with verbs*
- *Avoid you for negative messages*
- Describe objectively; focus on solutions.
- Owned not disowned

Role plays