

An illustration on the left side of the cover shows a stylized, elongated human figure in profile, wearing a cap and holding a large megaphone. The figure is positioned next to a large, detailed ear that appears to be listening. The background is dark and textured.

ASTD Training Basics Series

# COMMUNICATION

## *Basics*

JUDY JENINGS  
LINDA MALCAK

**A Complete, How-to Guide  
to Help You:**



**Connect With and Influence Your Audience**



**Become a Think-On-Your-Feet Trainer**



**Present With Authority and Listen Effectively**

 **ASTD Press**

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**Ordering information:** Books published by ASTD Press can be purchased by visiting our Website at [store.astd.org](http://store.astd.org) or by calling 800.628.2783 or 703.683.8100.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2004101573

ISBN-10: 1-56286-362-2

ISBN-13: 978-1-56286-362-3

Acquisitions and Development Editor: Mark Morrow

Copyeditor: Karen Eddleman

Interior Design and Production: Kathleen Schaner

Cover Design: Ana Ilieva

Cover Illustration: Phil and Jim Bliss

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# About the *Training Basics* Series

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**A**STD's *Training Basics* series recognizes and, in some ways, celebrates the fast-paced, ever-changing reality of organizations today. Jobs, roles, and expectations change quickly. One day you might be a network administrator or a process line manager, and the next day you might be asked to train 50 employees in basic computer skills or to instruct line workers in quality processes.

Where do you turn for help? The ASTD *Training Basics* series is designed to be your one-stop solution. The series takes a minimalist approach to your learning curve dilemma and presents only the information you need to be successful. Each book in the series guides you through key aspects of training: giving presentations, making the transition to the role of trainer, designing and delivering training, and evaluating training. The books in the series also include some advanced skills such as performance and basic business proficiencies.

The ASTD *Training Basics* series is the perfect tool for training and performance professionals looking for easy-to-understand materials that will prepare non-trainers to take on a training role. In addition, this series is the perfect reference tool for any trainer's bookshelf and a quick way to hone your existing skills. The titles currently planned for the series include:

- ▶ *Presentation Basics* (2003)
- ▶ *Trainer Basics* (2003)
- ▶ *Training Design Basics* (2003)
- ▶ *Facilitation Basics* (2004)
- ▶ *Communication Basics* (2004)
- ▶ *Performance Basics* (2004)
- ▶ *Evaluation Basics* (2005)
- ▶ *Needs Assessment Basics* (2005).





# Preface



Communication is as old as the hills and as fresh as your next conversation. It's the way humans define their unique way of connecting, as in, "We are really communicating!" or conversely, "I absolutely cannot communicate with that person!" The act (or the art) of human communication is so all-encompassing that a book about communication skills is a bit daunting. In fact, the topic itself usually consumes at least one entire aisle at any large book store . . . if not more.

For that reason, this book—*Communication Basics*—does not purport to be the final word on communication skills. Instead, we (the authors) are trying to give you (the trainer) a head start on the skills that we have learned and hope will help you listen to the participants and really hear them . . . or talk with the participants and be truly understood. To that end, we give you many techniques to try and steps to take to fine-tune your communication skills. Our goal is to set you on the path, but it's your job to start walking.

With so much information about communication already in print, why did we want to write yet another book? Basically, we think that our combined training experiences in various situations and environments over the years give us a unique perspective—one that will be advantageous to you. Our premise is that because different organizational cultures and subcultures respond to various communication styles, it's a good idea to have several appropriate styles in your back pocket.

When you are training or giving a presentation, the skills we offer can enhance the way you interact with your audience. In fact, the greater your range of styles, the greater the chance is that you will reach the desired results with any group under any situation.

Furthermore, we all have comfort zones that are reinforced every time we repeat behaviors. Those behaviors may work for us on a regular basis. However, when a



section contains a list of questions for you to ponder, sometimes it is a self-assessment tool, and sometimes it is a list of action steps you can take to improve your skills and help increase the chances for participant success.

## **Finally**

We hope you find our scenarios, experiences, and ideas worthwhile. Our goal is to help you become a more successful trainer and shorten your learning curve in the process. We would love to hear your personal stories. Tell us what happened when you tried on new communication behaviors. Please let us know what worked for you and what you learned in the process. In this way, we can all grow together.

Last, we offer a debt of thanks to our families, the arenas in which we first cut our communication teeth and in which we continue to develop.

Judy Jenings  
Linda Malcak  
July 2004



# Communicating From the Heart

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## What's Inside This Chapter

Here, you'll see how to:

- ▶ Use this book to help you connect with your participants
- ▶ Identify whether you are teaching from the heart
- ▶ Locate material in the book using a chapter-by-chapter outline.

## Who Cares About Learning—and Why?

Think back over all the teachers you've had during your life. How many stand out? What do you remember about them? Do you remember how they looked, how they stood in front of your class, how they interacted with your class? Did you look forward to class time? Did you enjoy preparing for their course? Most important, how many of those teachers or instructors had a profound influence on your life, on your learning, on your zeal for their subject? If you're like us, you remember only a select few.

Now think about all those teachers again but from a different perspective. What do you think they thought they were doing? Quite probably, they thought they were



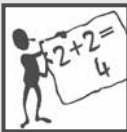
department, and although I understood the concepts, the field of statistics was never more than a series of senseless formulas to remember, apply, and spit back. You'd think that the second run-through in a different arena (this time education) would have made it sink in. Nope. The subject for me remained a series of meaningless formulas, applications, and so forth.

About 15 years later, though, I was developing two training programs for a major producer of truck engines. The programs were for certified quality engineers, and the topics were basic probability and statistics, statistical design of experiments, and regression analysis. For the first time, the application of this subject (statistics and a few permutations) made sense to me. The engine manufacturer used statistics to ensure that the engine parts had a predictable life expectancy and that truckers were not left stranded with loads of product out in the middle of nowhere. Suddenly that meaningless (to me) subject had a face—a meaning—and the concepts became memorable.

I have been able to apply the concepts of statistics ever since. How much better it would have been if the original instructors would have made this course come alive for me. Putting a real-life application and a need to know on what could have been strictly theoretical makes the student care because the instructor cares!

In short, memorable teachers are masters at making their subjects live for (and later in) their students. They aim for excellence and risk investing themselves and their efforts in the lives of the students sitting in their classrooms.

The best trainers are like this, too. They take time to connect with the learners who are in their classes, workshops, and seminars. They invest their energy, thereby ensuring that learners get the training they need and can put it to use the next day on the job. Like the life-changing teachers already mentioned, these trainers, too, are teaching from the heart. Why is this so vital to communication? It's vital because communication is more than a few techniques, no matter how well mastered. Communication is about connecting. In fact, it's all about connecting.



### Basic Rule 1

If you don't communicate that you care, you won't communicate.

