

Week

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How to Communicate



Week

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# COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Keeping the peace at home and work

**Week 5: How to improve communication and reduce stress**



## IN YOUR WEEK 5 PROGRAMME YOU WILL:

### **FIND**

Your style of communicating

### **TRY**

New tips for every communicator

### **SPOT**

Signs of good and bad interaction

### **KEEP**

A daily communication chart

<https://www.greateasternlife.com/my/en>

**LIVE  
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# How to de-stress in 8 easy steps

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
Starting your Journey	Stress at Home	Stress at Work	Life-changing Moments	 How to Communicate	The 4As	Tots and Teens	Staying Happy

## Communicating your way stress free – Week 5

Welcome to Week Five of the Stress Management Programme – you're nearly there!

Over the last few weeks we've looked at the stressors at home, work and the life changing events that cause us extreme anxiety. This week, we take a look at communication – the root cause of stress for many. It's something that we know should be simple. Yet more often than not a lack of it causes arguments and frustration.

**It's not just what you say, it's the way that you say it. And how you use body language as a means of communicating what you want to get across.** Being assertive is communication at its best – and we'll help you get there, whether you tend to be more passive or aggressive in your style today.

This week, we'll also show you **how to master the art of effectively being heard** – at home and work, by family members, close friends and co-workers. You'll discover that just by choosing your words carefully you can diffuse a difficult situation and help free your life from unnecessary stress.

Once you start incorporating these new ways of communicating into your every day life, you will find that many of the potentially stressful situations you used to worry about turn out to not be so bad after all.

Start small, live great.

### START SMALL TIP #5

#### Mind your language!



#### Use the right words to save stress

Effective communication should emphasise partnership. Just by changing “you” to “I” makes a potential argument disappear. Remember at home, or at work, you're in this together!

Here are some examples:

##### **At work:**

Don't say to colleagues: “You're always late!”

Say: “Is getting to work on time a problem – can I help in any way?”

##### **At home:**

Don't say to your partner: “Your son skipped school today”

Say: “Our son skipped school today”

# Find out how you communicate

Before downloading this guide you will have completed a questionnaire to find out what type of communicator you are. If you haven't taken the quiz yet, [click here](#) to do it now.

We all think we know how to talk and to listen, but a few small adjustments will easily resolve conflict and reduce stressful relationships – at home and work.



Just to refresh, here are the three ways that most of us communicate:

## The Passive Communicator

A passive communicator doesn't like to rock the boat. You will usually go along with a situation to avoid confrontation. Whilst you often know what you want, you tend not to voice it aloud. You can often get taken advantage of by more aggressive communicators, and can feel resentful and anxious because of this. For more self-confidence, try to communicate in a clear and calm voice.

## The Aggressive Communicator

Aggressive communicators tend to put their needs above others. You use rather harsh language to push your point of view. You can be dominant and often intimidating. Your body language can be overbearing. Although you may not always mean to be overpowering, this is how you come across. You should learn to be assertive without veering towards aggression to get your point across.

## The Assertive Communicator

If you are an assertive communicator you are usually also a good listener and effective communicator – but there's always room for improvement! You generally communicate in a clear, concise and respectful manner, rarely raising your voice, yet you get your point across. Others generally feel at ease in your presence and are often motivated by you.

# Try our top techniques

Talking and listening effectively is key to stress free communication. Whatever personality type you are, here are some top tips for how to keep any interaction relaxed, calm and worry free.



## Power For The Passive Communicator

You are afraid of offering your point of view. But burying your needs under those of others will only cause resentment to build. To be more assertive try to:

- **Make eye contact and use confident body language**  
Looking at someone when you are talking to them and not hiding your hands behind your back shows you have nothing to hide.
- **Take your time**  
Rather than rushing in with a quick response to keep everyone happy, think about what is best for you.
- **Keep emotions in check**  
If you're not used to being assertive, the fact that someone doesn't agree with you may leave you feeling hurt and emotional. Keep in mind that you want a solution that's good for both of you before you cave in.
- **Make a decision**  
It doesn't have to be life-changing. Start small. Instead of asking a friend which movie they want to see, tell them what you'd like to watch.



## Calming Actions For The Aggressive Communicator

Whether it's that you are over eager or feel that you have the most valid point of view, your style is rather overbearing. To tone it down try to:

- **Think before you speak**  
Resist bulldozing your way into a conversation – or speaking over people who are still talking.
- **Use "I" instead of "You"**  
Talking from a personal standpoint is much less accusatory. For example if you say "I feel misunderstood," rather than, "You made me feel awkward," it will be much easier to reach a compromise.
- **Don't dominate conversation**  
Piercing eye contact and a defensive stance will immediately put you in a confrontational situation. Relax, listen and smile and your aggression will turn to assertion.
- **Lighten the mood**  
Humour can help in nearly every situation. Try and see what you are experiencing through someone else's eyes – or think how it would be viewed as a funny movie.



## Assistance For The Assertive Communicator

You generally communicate in a clear and concise manner, but remember that it's not all about what you say – it's also about what you hear. Try to:

- **Listen before speaking**  
Not only is it good manners, it may prolong your life. *In The Language of The Heart*, psychologist James Lynch says that actively listening lowers your blood pressure.
- **Wait for compliments**  
It's a measure of self-confidence to wait for a compliment. Bide your time for praise instead of telling as many people as possible how good you are.
- **Don't outdo the speaker**  
When someone else is talking, hear what he or she is saying instead of formulating your comeback. Resist the chance to come up with a better story or funnier joke – and let them have their moment.
- **Hold back with advice**  
Sometimes people just want to vent, or a share a concern about their lives. While you may think you have some great ideas and solutions, don't jump to offer them – wait for the appropriate time.



# Spot the signs of good and bad communication

Sometimes we're not even conscious that we're doing it – but there are a host of actions that can either help get your message across – or form a barrier against good communication. Keep an eye on your behaviour and use your body language for effective interaction. Often enough it's what you don't say that counts!

Here's a handy checklist to keep you on the right track.



## DO

- ☐ Make eye contact – but don't stare
- ☐ Nod when people are talking – it shows you are listening, but don't overdo it
- ☐ Use your hands confidently to make a point – make firm gestures
- ☐ Smile genuinely – everyone around you will do the same

## DON'T

- ☐ Put your hands in pockets or behind your back – it looks like you have something to hide
- ☐ Cross your arms and legs – it makes you look defensive
- ☐ Hide your mouth with your hand – it looks like you can't trust what you are saying
- ☐ Angle your body away from the person you are speaking to – it shows disinterest and rudeness

# Keep a communication chart

Knowing what you want and communicating it clearly can actively help reduce stress. Being assertive is the way ahead for stress-free communication.

Note down some key conversations you have this week and what you said. Then rate them on the scale from passive to aggressive, and look at what you should have said. If you're usually shy to come forward, being assertive takes a little bit of practice. Equally, if your tone tends to be rather aggressive it will take a while to learn to tone it down – use this handy printout to help you identify patterns and better work on them.

## MY COMMUNICATION DIARY

SITUATION	WHAT I SAID	SCALE	WHAT I SHOULD HAVE SAID
example: <i>MY PARTNER ISN'T SHOWING ME ANY AFFECTION</i>	<i>YOU NEVER WANT TO GO ANYWHERE WITH ME ANY MORE</i>		<i>I FEEL HURT THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO SPEND TIME WITH ME</i>
example: <i>MY COLLEAGUE KEEPS PUTTING ME DOWN</i>	<i>YOU ARE ALWAYS COMPLAINING ABOUT MY WORK</i>		<i>I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M DOING WRONG – CAN YOU EXPLAIN?</i>



Print this out and at the end of seven days you'll be able to see how well you communicated in stressful situations - and in time all your conversations should be hitting the assertive sweet spot!

# Managing stress is easier when you know how!

Go to [Live Great Reads](#) for more useful articles, features and content.



## How to Effectively Manage Stress

Strategies for a happier life



## 5 Calming Techniques to Use at Work

Breathe easy at the office



## Stress Busting Tips from a Medical Expert

Dr Caroline Low tells you how



## Don't Stress About Money

Successful saving tips



Understanding stress and managing how you deal with it is a key to a happy life.

# Next week...



We hope you found the fifth week of the programme helpful and are now enjoying the opportunity to converse conflict free!

Next week in Week 6 of the Stress Management Programme we'll be putting your new-found communication skills to the test to see how you categorise stress. With the help of the 4A's we'll help you look at different situations and see how best to deal with them by acceptance, adaption, alteration or avoidance.

## How?

- Find how you react to stressful situations
- Try tips for avoiding, altering, adapting and accepting
- Spot ways to rate your stress
- Keep more time for yourself



### Want more?

Sign up to our monthly Live Great Newsletter now and enjoy FREE health tips, VIP invites to numerous events, and EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS.

<https://www.greateasternlife.com/my/en/personal-insurance/live-great/newsletter-subscription.html>



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#### REFERENCES

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Questionnaire endorsed by:

Glenn Graves at [www.counselingperspective.com](http://www.counselingperspective.com)

Based in Singapore, Glenn holds a Masters Degree in Psychology. He also has a certificate in Intermediate Training in Ericksonian Psychotherapy and Hypnosis from the Milton H. Erickson Foundation.



#### Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Berhad

Menara Great Eastern, 303 Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur  
Company Limited (Reg No. 93745-A)

#### Any Questions? We are happy to help!

General line: (603) 4259 8888

Customer service care line: 1-300-1-300-88

Email: [wecare-my@greateasternlife.com](mailto:wecare-my@greateasternlife.com)

Website: [www.greateasternlife.com/my/en](http://www.greateasternlife.com/my/en)