



# ***Interpersonal Communication Basics***

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## ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

**Evaluative**—“You should . . .”; “You’re wrong . . .”; “You should know that . . .”

**Unsolicited Advice**—“It would be best for you to . . .”; “Why don’t you . . .”

**Diagnosing**—“You’re getting defensive!”

**Prying**—Puts other on the spot and is intrusive

**Commanding**—“You had better . . .”; “You have to . . .”

**Lecturing**—“Don’t you realize . . .”

**Devaluation Response**—“It’s not so bad . . .”

**Topping**—“That’s nothing compared to . . .”

**Condescending**—“I figured you’d do that!”; “I should’ve expected that from you!”

**All or Nothing**—“You always do that! Yes you do!”; “You’re never . . .”

**ACTIVITY:** Can you find two types of responses that you have either given or received? Write in the lines below the type of response and the actual statement. Then rewrite the statement in a more effective way.

\_\_\_\_\_ Type of Response:

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative: \_\_\_\_\_

Take one of the top types of responses and write a statement of what you have actually said to another.

\_\_\_\_\_ Type of Response:

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative: \_\_\_\_\_



## **T.I.P. #46**

### **ACTIVITY: WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE**

**THEORY:** This hands-on activity is fun and takes very little time, but the lesson packs a punch! Who would think that a coffee filter could teach us about positive thinking? This visual activity shows us that no matter how down we feel, things are looking up!

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Provide one flat-bottomed coffee filter for each participant. Ask participants to write on the bottom side of the filter those negative self-talk messages that they persistently use with themselves. On the top side, ask them to write the healthier, counter-messages to those negative self-talk ideas. Then have them stand up and drop the filter. They find with surprise that the coffee filter winds up right-side up! How can we “right ourselves” and persist in more healthy patterns of thought? Another point to be made with this activity is that when we drop the filters from a sitting position, they often do not have enough time to right themselves. This illustrates the point that with the assumptions people make for themselves that help them remain pessimistic, they simply are not giving themselves enough time to “right themselves,” so don’t give up trying just yet!

**PROCESSING:** I have used this activity with clients, in training groups, and in workplace-wellness groups. No matter what the forum, people enjoy the activity and find the analogy quite useful. This is a popular favorite and one that reveals a profound message in a fun and active way. For extra punch, use huge industrial coffee filters. (I got them from a hotel at which I was doing a seminar.) The big filters work the same and make quite a sight!

