

## ESAF Winter 2022 Workshop: Effective Communication between Generations

The following list of specific things to do that can improve your communication skills was shared during the workshop:

1. **Listen, listen, and listen.** People want to know that they are being heard. Really listen to what the other person is saying, instead of thinking about your response. Ask for clarification to avoid misunderstandings. At that moment, the person speaking to you should be the most important person in your life.
2. **Who you are talking to matters.** It is okay to use acronyms and informal language when you are communicating with a buddy, but if you are emailing or texting your boss, “Hey,” “TTYL” or any informal language, has no place in your message. You cannot assume that the other person even knows what the acronym means.
3. **Body language matters.** This is important for face-to-face meetings and video conferencing. Make sure that you appear accessible, so have open body language. This means that you should not cross your arms. And keep eye contact so that the other person knows that you are paying attention.
4. **Check your message before you hit send.** Spell- and grammar-checkers are lifesavers, but they are not foolproof. Double check what you have written to make sure that your words are communicating your intended message.
5. **Be brief, yet specific.** In both written- and verbal-communications, practice being brief while specific enough. You want to provide enough information for the other person to understand what you are trying to say.
6. **Write things down.** Take notes while you are talking to another person or when you are in a meeting, and do not rely on your memory. Send a follow-up email to make sure that you understand what was being said during the conversation.
7. **Sometimes it’s better to pick up the phone.** If you find that you have a lot to say, instead of sending an email, call the person instead. Email is great, but sometimes it is easier to communicate what you have to say verbally.
8. **Think before you speak.** Always pause before you speak. Take a moment and pay close attention to what you say and how you say it. This one habit will allow you to avoid embarrassments.
9. **Treat everyone equally.** Do not talk down to anyone, treating everyone with respect. Treat others as your equal.
10. **Maintain a positive attitude and smile.** Even when you are speaking on the phone, smile because the other person will know it. When you smile often and exude a positive attitude, people will respond positively to you.

Communicating effectively is a teachable skill. Keeping a few of these tips in mind will enable you to hone up on improving how you communicate with others.