

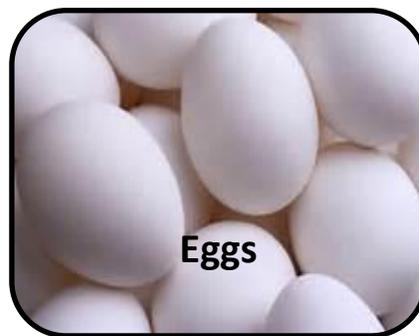


Communication is the bonding agent to all interactions we face on a daily basis and yet we continue to make the same mistakes. With a few simple tips, you can have positive results.

1. **Misalignment on Topic:** Although the information is clear to you as the speaker, it is not to the audience you are addressing. In many cases this information can result in a completely different result. Be clear and concise with your information.



Boneless Chicken



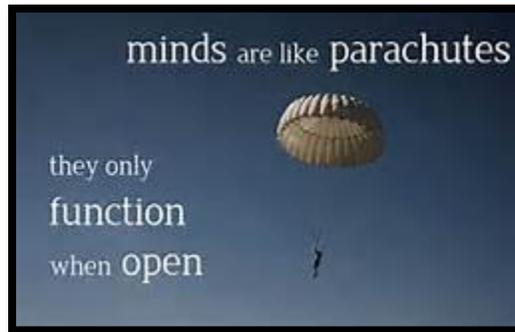
Eggs

v.s.

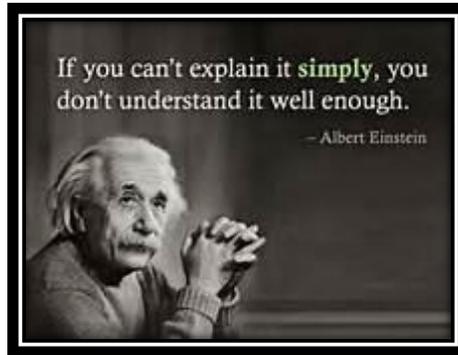
Both are correct, however definitely not the same.

2. **Interrupting:** We have all done it. In some situations, the distraction can be enough for the speaker to lose train of thought, resulting in the loss of key information. When information is missed, you risk deadlines, financial obligations, staffing issues or worse. In other situations, the speaker could become frustrated, creating loss of confidence and respect. It is best to make note of where the conversation is when you have questions. Once the party finishes you can then reflect back and clarify what you understood and possibly request further clarification. If you are having a demonstration, it is best to note at the very beginning if you would like to have questions throughout or at the end. Both parties then have a more cohesive environment to speak.

3. **Assuming:** NEVER assume you understand. One small misunderstanding can result in a massive mistake, again resulting in missed deadlines. Be sure that you completely understand the information, and how things are connected to one another. Once you have this information understood, easier transformation of the project can occur.
4. **Back to Front:** Requesting what the person is looking for as an end result and working backwards can save not only time but money. Although the person may have one idea in mind and what steps are needed to get there, your input and questions will potentially open up a separate view point.



5. **Negative Responses:** Pointing out that the person is wrong will lead to more resistance. It is always best to use a redirection approach. Rather than say I don't believe what you are asking for is accurate, try clarifying with the person how it looks to you and why you have a different approach. This will allow you and the other person to explore various options which may not have been considered, or provide further clarification to items misunderstood. Remember not all people respond to constructive criticism.
6. **Minimize catch phrases:** People tend to use catch phrases too often, and can be less effective. When used too often they are perceived as a pause, redirection, avoidance to answer, a reflex to keep the other party engaged or simply as a habit. Therefore, it is always best to use with caution.
7. **Ask Questions:** Asking questions is not a sign of weakness when they are only asked once. Consistent asking of the same question will result in lack of confidence. If you are not finding the answer you are looking for, try asking it in a different way. Always ensure all parties in connection to the project are fully aware of the scope and expectations, as they may require additional information or have questions which could affect timelines.



8. **Reading People:** This may seem odd; however, people tend to want the same approach taken with them as they do with you. Try to pick up on the characteristics of the parties involved in the communication. If you are speaking with someone who is direct, then respond using the same approach. Someone that describes things in extreme detail with excitement would not respond to the direct approach, in fact would respond better if you also provided the same essence of communication. Other individuals which express themselves in a very analytical way with little emotion, will require you to answer with known facts and details showing confidence. If you do not have the information at hand the worst thing you can say is I don't know. Rather, answer them by stating you will find the information and get back to them. **Body language** can speak louder than words, therefore keep emotions in check and respond appropriately. If someone is becoming agitated, defuse the situation by taking a break or change the topic. Once settled readdress at a later point. If pushed people have a tendency to tune out and become more emotional, which will not provide a cohesive communication platform. A smile not only can be seen but sensed in the voice, this will bring people in to the conversation faster, and lead to a more positive result.
9. **Recap:** Take an extra few minutes to recap the conversation to ensure that you are all on the same page. Offer to provide a draft version and request sign off, before extensive amounts of work have been completed. Should modifications need to be made, it is easier now than later. Saving you both time and money.

Reflect on past conversations or situations which resulted in issues. I am confident that it will become more evident, communication was the main cause.

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