**Communication is about more than words**

**Task:** Read through the work either by yourself or with a family member and then watch the clips following the links below. Most of what is written below is mainly covered in the video links if the reading becomes to much.

**How many times have you seen ‘excellent communication skills’ listed as an essential requirement for a job or a course? We all spend a lot of time chatting on our phones – surely that means we’re great communicators? Well, sometimes being a good communicator actually means keeping quiet, Stacey Dooley explains.**

**Now, I’m a talker. I love a good old chat and I think that’s pretty well-known!**

Some might say as a documentary presenter, it’s my job to talk for a living. But it’s important to know the difference between communication and just filling the air with words.

Communication is at the heart of my job so I take a lot of trouble to get it right, and I pride myself on doing it well. It’s my job to be able to make people from all walks of life feel comfortable enough to tell me about their lives. I can then communicate those personal stories to the audience watching at home. But communication is also essential for me and the team I’m working with: the producers and the camera and sound crews. We need to all be able to understand what is needed and when, to make the best documentary possible.

**Practise and refine**

So we are communicating all the time, and that way we can all do our bit. There’s no point in me starting an interview if the documentary director hasn’t talked to me about part of the story we need to bring out that day. Communication in the workplace is about making sure everyone knows what they should be doing, when they should be doing it and why it needs to be done. You have to make sure you have clearly explained to your team what is expected from them to get the job done effectively.

While filming my new BBC series The Nine to Five, I met a 16-year-old called Elliott. Although Elliott was a great talker when it came to knocking around with his pals in college, he hadn’t quite grasped how communication worked in the workplace and why it was such a key skill. It was so lovely to see him work out the difference between the two and learn those things over his time in the different workplaces.

By the time we got to the final placement at Heathrow, Elliott had really had the chance to practise and refine his communication skills, and it showed. During his first day, he was in charge of customer care. This meant he was the face of the airport for those customers that needed his assistance or advice. He had to learn to be professional, friendly and helpful while representing his employers. Result!

**Simple but effective**

The other thing to remember about communication is that it can take different forms and have different levels of intensity. You can talk to someone face-to-face, you can phone them, you can email them or you can text message them. It’s not difficult to see that talking to someone in person has a much higher chance of being understood or taken seriously than a short message on a phone.

Now so much of our time is spent on our phones and online, it can be easy to think that is talking, but at work actually engaging someone in a discussion about something when you are in the same room cannot be beaten. It’s simple but effective, and people rarely get the wrong end of the stick that way too!

**Speak their language**

The secret is to understand who the person in front of you is, and to adapt your communication style to what works for them. If you have to explain a difficult technical concept to someone who doesn’t know anything about that topic, use simple terms, or perhaps use examples from another field that they have experience of. If your colleague is quiet and reserved, perhaps constant chit chat isn’t for them. Get to know the people around you, and learn to speak their language.

Finally, I think the key thing to remember is knowing how to listen to other people. It’s not just about you talking to them, it’s about you taking what they are saying as well. It’s also as much as part of your job as anything else you do. Never assume that people know things just because you do. If they already know, then great. If they didn’t know, they will be grateful for your help!

"This is my in-person smiley face emoji"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z477382>

Watch Elliotts video.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p06zhf9j/the-nine-to-five-with-stacey-dooley>

Watch Series 1.3 by following the link