

Lynne Cunningham's
Book Review

I just read a great book that I think should be added to your Service Excellence Library.

Book	<i>The Healing Art of Communication</i>
Author	Burl Stamp
Pillar of Excellence	This is a communication book which covers all Pillars
Publisher's Book Description	Higher acuity with shorter lengths of stay. Complicated processes. Competing egos. Emotionally-charged decisions. Is there another environment where communication is any more challenging than health care? Regardless of your job or responsibilities, improving the way you communicate with others can lead to greater professional success and more fulfilling relationships at work and at home. <i>The Healing Art of Communication</i> provides new perspective on why interactions in health care can be so tough. This straightforward, practical guide offers specific strategies for all health professionals who want to improve their relationships with others and enhance the care they provide to patients.
LC Review	Stamp incorporates the concepts Studer Group talks about in AIDET, Critical Communications and SBAR in a succinct, easy-to-read book. There are excellent examples of conversations with staff and with patients as well as super tips for written and e-mailed communications. He includes a model for developing communications action plans. I've already recommended this book as a pre-read for an August retreat I'm doing. It's a "two-hour book" – an easy commitment for leaders to make before a retreat or Leadership Development session.
Page	<i>Lynne suggests that you pay special attention to some of these features in the book.</i>
11	Failure to communicate effectively certainly impacts our personal lives. But the problem of not being understood has equally significant consequences in our professional lives. When you work in healthcare, the consequences can be disastrous. In the hospital environment, better communications not only improves relationships with patients, families and colleagues, but can also improve the quality and safety of the clinical care we provide. Over 70 percent of all sentinel events have been found to involve lack of communication or miscommunication as a factor in their cause.
14	In any work setting, the ability to develop strong, effective relationships with peers, subordinates and superiors is usually a key determinant of individuals success and job satisfaction.
18 – 21	What defines effective communication? 1. Communication is a process, not an isolated event or single occurrence. It's a structured set of events that lead to a specific goal.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Communication is a two-way street. 3. Communication is a common system of signs, symbols and information that is shared. People need to be speaking the same "language" to communicate successfully. 4. Understanding – unless our audience both receives and understands the message we are trying to convey, no real communication has taken place.
21+ and 80- 82	<p>C: compose – composing your thoughts and focusing on both the purpose of the exchange and on the other person are the first essential steps in achieving accurate, satisfying communication. Be well informed, and think about the outcome you want and need from the exchange.</p> <p>A: acknowledge – even if you disagree with the content or opinions expressed in a conversation, acknowledge that you're heard and understand what the other person is trying to communicate to you. Create a constructive, positive environment as much as possible.</p> <p>R: respond – respond with your own thoughts in the same, measured, reasoned way you listened. Share feelings when appropriate.</p> <p>E: evaluate – effective communication requires a willingness to not only understand but also to critically evaluate another's message vis-à-vis your own statements and opinions. Focus on helping the other person deal with the information you have shared and its consequences.</p>
31+	<p>Compose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Think about the end at the beginning ➤ Focus on one issue at a time ➤ Call the other person by name ➤ Sit down ➤ Look at the other person ➤ "Walk away" from the computer screen or other things you're working on
37+	<p>Acknowledge – is more complex than simply repeating the words someone else has spoken.</p> <p>Accuracy in Patient Care Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limit complex patient care instructions to one or two key points ➤ Ask the person receiving instructions to repeat information back to you ➤ Even if not asked, summarize important instructions anyway ➤ Recognize whether you are a verbal or visual learner ➤ Never hesitate to ask
50+	<p>Respond – largely determines how much trust and rapport we enjoy.</p> <p>How do we build rapport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Smile

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Introduce yourself and your role ▼ Understand and repeat the person’s name ▼ Recognize and acknowledge the other person’s circumstances ▼ Maintain appropriate eye contact ▼ Cite shared background or experiences <p>Building Long-Term Rapport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Learn to disagree constructively – getting people to consider your ideas is as much about <i>how</i> you present information as it is about <i>what</i> you present. ▼ Show a sincere interest in others’ issues and concerns ▼ Develop a spirit of cooperation and willingness to compromise ▼ Look beyond your own biases and pre-conceived ideas, particularly for areas of agreement within conflict ▼ Never compromise confidentiality when it is requested or assumed ▼ Be genuinely honest
66+	<p>As a framework for prospectively identifying roadblocks that may affect our communication, we can think about barriers in three general categories: physical, attitudinal and situational.</p> <p>Physical barriers: language, communication abilities, physical disabilities, age and audible or visual noise in the environment.</p> <p>Attitudinal barriers: preconceived opinions about the topic at hand, general issues like politics, religion, sociocultural issues and ethics.</p> <p>Situation barriers: stress, emotional reactions to specific troubling events, mental distractions or message overload.</p> <p>Other potential barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Time ▼ Emotions ▼ Preconceived Ideas or Attitudes ▼ Socioeconomic and Cultural Differences ▼ Age and Experience ▼ Language ▼ Organizational Politics and Hierarchy
82+	<p>Delivering Bad News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Think about when and where you have the conversation ▼ Be truthful, yet tactful ▼ Be as well informed as possible ▼ Listen sympathetically and nonjudgmentally

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Show and share feelings ▼ Use humor – but carefully ▼ Understand the role of faith ▼ Just be there
88+	<p>Giving Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Focus on the behavior, not the person ▼ Start with a positive ▼ Identify the specific behavior and why it is a problem ▼ Keep an open mind ▼ Agree on the needed change and its benefits ▼ Specify follow-up when appropriate
90+	<p>Saying “No”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Acknowledge your understanding of the request ▼ Lay the groundwork for the definite “no” statement ▼ Say “no” ▼ Offer and negotiate alternatives
94+	<p>Handling Patient/Family Complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Ensure you have a clear picture of what happened and why the patient is upset ▼ Apologize ▼ Assess the seriousness of the complaint and your authority to address the issue ▼ Explain the actions you will take ▼ Follow up
99+	<p>Making Writing Less Painful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Know where you are going before you begin ▼ Know your audience ▼ Listen
107+	<p>Structuring Your Message for Best Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Start purposefully ▼ Concisely present key facts, figures and issues to support your position or request ▼ Summarize your key points and express feelings

110+	<p>Tips to Make Your Message Clearer and More Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use common words and phrases that are easily read and well understood. ▶ When writing information for patients and/or families, avoid clinical abbreviations, technical phrases or medical jargon that are familiar only to hospital personnel. Highlight key information in bullet point lists. ▶ Use boldface, <i>italics</i>, or <u>underlined</u> text to emphasize key points and draw the reader's attention to those items that require action or response. ▶ Always proofread your documents to be sure you have written exactly what you want to communicate. 	
111+	<p>Effective E-mail Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a clear subject line. ▶ Write informally, not unprofessionally. E-mail is not instant messaging, especially at work. Notes that are poorly structured and contain multiple errors not only risk being misunderstood; they also can reflect negatively on the credibility of the sender. Proofreading is just as important in e-mail as in other written correspondence or documents. ▶ Limit distribution lists, especially in reply messages. ▶ Avoid emotional or sensitive subjects. ▶ Never express anger in e-mail. ▶ Beware of sending confidential information in e-mail. 	
123	Hearing is passive; listening is an active skill that requires you to confirm understanding of the other person's message.	
Overall rating	Excellent. Buy, read and highlight this book. You'll be glad you did.	
Publisher and Year Published	2006	James and Brookfield Publishers
Price	\$19.95	Discounted on www.amazon.com
Recommended by	Long-time colleague Tom Peck	

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