

Models: Professional Development

It has been a privilege to train and mentor thousands of people. "Model of Professional Development" is a four-stage template (model) I use to "know where someone is" in their professional development and where to focus next. The stages are:

1. Content
2. Process
3. Perception
4. Receptivity

Everyone starts at the Content. This is the level where one learns the information, data, policy, etc. Often, our college classes provide this level of our professional development. This level is best described as the "verbal" level of communication—"what we say".

Perception and Receptivity are the "art of communication".

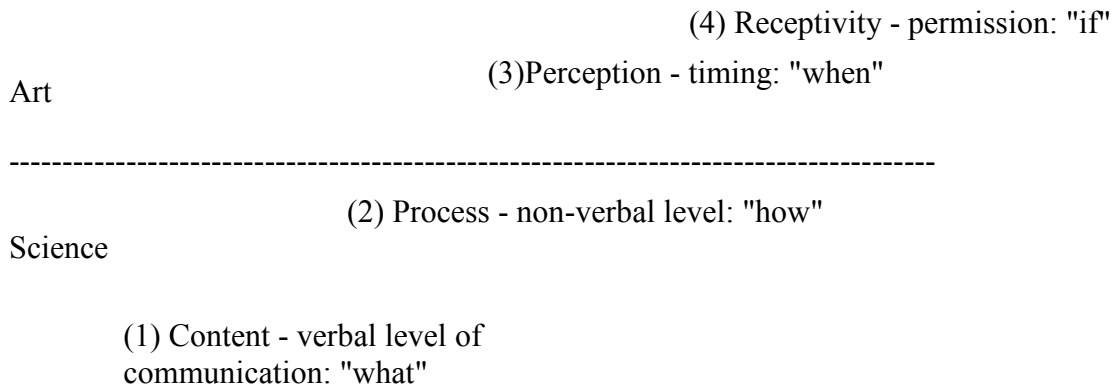
While the Content is the "what" of communication, the Process level focuses on "how" to deliver the "what." The Process level is the non-verbal aspects of communication. Process ("non-verbals") is a collection of techniques and strategies with three major categories: what we do with our eyes (visual), voice (auditory) and body (kinesthetic). These categories can be further described as:

- Visual: whether we make eye contact or not
- Auditory: whether our voice sounds like we are sending or seeking information
- Kinesthetic: whether we stand close or far from a person; whether we gesture or not

Perception is the "timing" of when to use these techniques and strategies.

The ultimate level of communication is "Receptivity." This is the "when" of whether the listener wants to have communication with us. Literally, the recipient gives the speaker permission to communicate. It is on this level of professional development that the communicator decides "if" to share or wait until another time to share information.

The four stages can be displayed as



The first two levels, Content and Process, are referred to as the "science of communication". When someone is at these levels of professional development, their goal is to be consistent in their expectations, policies and behaviors. People find someone on this level as reliable and predictable. The stages of Content and Process, often result in the person using the words "always" and "never" as in "I always..." "I never..."

Perception and Receptivity are the "art of communication". On this level, the artisan switches from being consistent on a behavioral level to being consistent on a principle level.

**Instead of "I always do this ..."
the person operates from
"I always consider these factors..."**

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Non-verbal Intelligence

"Seeing it coming" is the essence of non-verbal intelligence. Imagine how many times things might have gone differently if you had seen it coming! Imagine now, what it will be like to not only see it coming, but knowing if you need to respond...

Initially, our non-verbal intelligence operates from "generalizations." While generalizations are often not true, they provide us with statistical accuracy, so that we are not constantly surprised by life. Using generalizations help us develop our non-verbal intelligence. Non-verbal intelligence is the ability to:

- Recognize patterns of communication
- Label patterns of communication
- Predict patterns of communication
- *Respond* to patterns of communication

The tapestry of artistic communication comes from the fabric of being outside your self with quality timing being woven throughout.

Most people have the ability to recognize patterns of communication. For example, you are attending a meeting and notices that Frank's voice suddenly becomes loud. The rest of the members attending are wide-eyed, their mouths open. You definitely recognize that an important pattern of communication has occurred. In fact, you are so mesmerized by Frank's behavior and the other members' response that you become preoccupied with wanting to remember this turning point of the meeting.

If you had the labels for the behaviors, you can stay in "up-time", a state of disassociated awareness, and notice what happens next. As your non-verbal vocabulary increases, you can quickly label Frank's voice as "credible" and the members' reactions as "shocked."

“Predict” or “seeing it coming” is the 3rd level of non-verbal intelligence, also known as **Perception**. The “Predict” level of non-verbal intelligence comes from having seen and labeled enough examples of credibility to know that such behaviors result in listeners feeling like the speaker doesn’t want input. So, when the members are shocked, you are not because you instantly recognized, labeled, and predicted that the members would be shocked.

The last level of non-verbal intelligence, “*Respond*,” is put in italics because you may not have “permission” to respond. As you develop perception and timing—the ultimate question is broached—the question of “*if*” it is appropriate to respond... if you have “permission” to respond.

Breathing is the only reliable indicator of permission. In MGA's Pentimento, BLIP is the single most important non-verbal variable. It is the only cross-culturally accurate indicator of your permission level with another person or group. Influence is the cousin of permission.

When trying to determine “if”, ask yourself, “Do I have an outcome and am I flexible in getting it?” It is important to determine “do I have permission to...” and “if” the employment of the technique or feedback is likely to result in the desired outcome. The concept of “if” and “permission” seeks long-term relationship over short-term rapport.

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Perception

Knowing what we are seeing and having the labels/tools to react is the start of mindful perception. Perception is the “timing” of communication, if we can predict what is likely to happen in a situation we are observing, we will have the ability to choose a response.

The paradox we face in searching for an understanding of perception is that perceiving is something that we do naturally. We see what is around us and/or hear without expending any particular effort.

The idea that perception is not that complex misleads us. Effortless perception is a small part of what is happening as you perceive. We normally define perception as a way to inform us about our environment and what might be important to our survival in that environment.

This unconscious type of perception helps us react to our environment. So, our perception creates both an experience of the environment and enables us to act within it. Our reactions raise the classic debate — stimulus versus experience.

For our purposes, we will define perception as the ability to observe communication. This is an extension of the previously mentioned “predict” level.* The difference is that with perception we look for different things based on the context of what we are watching.

When	Ask yourself
One person	“What likely is this person’s values, beliefs, presuppositions and perceptual filters?”
Two people interacting	“Who is likely to influence/dominate?”
Three or more (group dynamics)	“What is likely to happen next?”
Systems/organizations	“What is likely to be produced/reinforced?”

It is important to note that to increase your effectiveness and influence as a communicator, perception does not just happen.

**Understanding what we see, without deletions and distortions—mindful perception
is the entrance into the artistic level of communication.**

Often the difference between power and influence is not the technique employed, but the "timing" of the employment. For most people, this level eludes them. This level is the "art of communication" level.**

The best way to learn perception is to video tape/film human communication and then study the footage. By watching reality in a distorted fashion (e.g., fast forward and slow motion) insights are gained. Literally, we have to distort "time" to learn "timing."

If you can see half of what you observe you are brilliant.

If you know which half you are a genius.

*<http://www.michaelgrinder.com/e-zine/e-zine2-v2.htm>

**<http://www.michaelgrinder.com/e-zine/e-zine1.htm>