A hand in the top left corner holds a globe. A leafy branch enters from the right side, partially overlapping the globe. The background is a solid purple color.

**GURU
GUIDE**
with
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with
Nigel Risner

30

**HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE IN
COMMUNICATING AT WORK**

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'Guru Guide' is an attempt to refine decades of hard-earned expertise into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.

INTRODUCING NIGEL RISNER



When we first had a conversation with Nigel, we laughed so hard that we were nearly out of breath! Packed with amazing one liners (that take a few minutes to sink in simply because it's so tongue-in-cheek), and brilliantly poignant juxtapositions seamlessly woven into the same sentence, Nigel's sessions will give you enough substance in an hour than most would over a full day of training!

Nigel possesses the ability to be pointed without being rude, hilarious without being silly, and deadly serious without being boring - characteristics that you notice about him right from the very first time you speak with him.

A seasoned veteran in the speaking circles - and considered possibly one of the best in his chosen field - Nigel is also an author, a well-respected communications consultant, and a Personal Coach for many Senior Managers.

Nigel has become one of our dearest friends, and we do hope we get the opportunity to get him down to our little island soon enough!

For over 25 centuries, human beings have observed that there are four basic personality styles.

The Greek philosopher Hippocrates described four temperaments that are labelled as Choleric, Phlegmatic, Sanguine, and Melancholic. A summary description of these historic four personality styles is as follows:

- » an outgoing, task-oriented personality that is quick to act (choleric)
- » an outgoing, people-oriented personality that is quick to act (sanguine)
- » a reserved, people-oriented personality that is slow to act (phlegmatic)
- » a reserved, task-oriented personality that is slow to act (melancholic)

Since we haven't learned much from the age-old method, we've had to adapt to a modern method of looking at it. This led to Nigel Risner creating the 'Animal Kingdom':

- » Lion
- » Elephant
- » Monkey
- » Dolphin

WHY DOES COMMUNICATION GO HORRIBLY WRONG ?



Actually, communication goes right the majority of times, otherwise none of us would be here, isn't it ? It's not as bad as what pessimists say. However, here's the thing: it can be much better and if it did, most major misunderstandings will not occur. There's a direct relationship between lack of results and miscommunication and if you fix the communication part, voila, your performance will get significantly better too!

So why does communication go horribly wrong? Because, as with most things, we don't get some of the basics right. Communication doesn't have to be difficult nor complicated, but it is possibly one of the most elusive skills managers attempt to master – merely because no one really focus on the simplest of things - and therefore they make fundamental errors.

Don't worry, we'll give you the basics right here in this Guru Guide.

WHY IS IT EVEN MORE COMPLICATED AT WORK ?



Who says its more complicated at work ?

At least if you get really peeved, you tell your boss to shove it where the sun doesn't shine (no, we do not recommend this course of action at all!) and find another job, but imagine miscommunications at home? How do you mend fences after a really big blow-up with your loved ones? There is so much more at stake with miscommunications at home than there'll ever be at work!

The complication is this: we rely on communication as a primary tool for motivation, engagement, Performance Management and when you look at it, every single facet of management. So if you are a leader or a junior just starting out, your primary tool to get anything done is communication. Therefore when communication isn't optimal, everyone else is suboptimal, and frustrations arise (a lot more than at home) because there are more people involved in the overall process.

There is a chain of command and a scope of work we need to contend with; also the work itself is quite interconnected. So ensuring communication becomes effective is essential for the smooth functioning of any organisation.

Remember, we lead people through better communication and better management of processes.



CEO
...CEPER

1 m 0

PRINCIPLE 1 : KNOW WHO YOU ARE : KNOW WHO YOU ARE COMMUNICATING WITH



The first and most fundamental principle to remember is to identify who you are, and who the others you work with are - from the perspective of their 'types'.

It's quite clear that we are all unique and different, but you can also see certain common 'types' of people. Different categories want different things and unless you 'give them what they want and how they want it', chances are that no matter what you do they are not going to be happy.

So if you want to be effective in your communications, then figure out the different 'types' first - every thing else is secondary!

TOOL 1 : NIGEL RISNER'S ZOO !



Click here to watch a quick video on the concept

Curious to know what 'type of animal' you are : click here to take Nigel's quiz for free

What Animal are you in the Workplace Zoo?

9 Questions

Find out which animal you are at work and how you communicate in the workplace zoo!



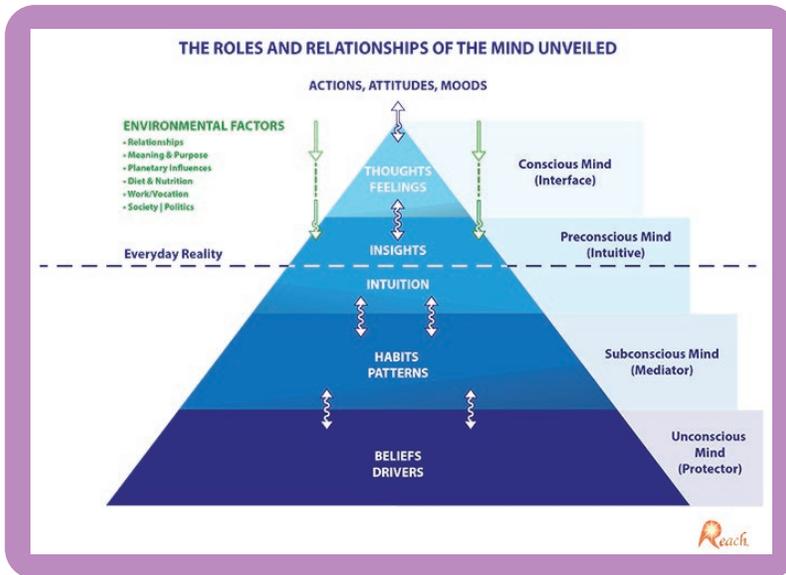
Start

Nigel's rather simple analogy of a zoo and the different 'animals' in it is a superb start to look at those around you and see 'what they want' from you:

- » Monkeys - need lots of 'fun'
- » Lions - needs it short, sharp and to the point
- » Dolphins - you need to be nice to them
- » Elephants - want depth and detail

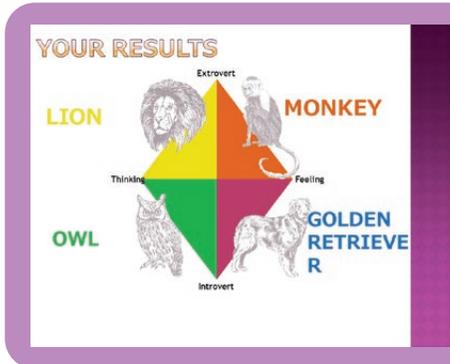
Now here is the point: if you're a manager, you need to be the 'zoo keeper', and ensure you give each of your stakeholders what they want, rather than what you think they should get.

PRINCIPLE 2 : COMMUNICATION IS AT MULTIPLE LEVELS



Nigel's simple animal matrix for identifying personality traits

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Lion (Orange Pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single - minded Visionary Straight forward Purposeful Persevering | <p>Monkey (Yellow Pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playful Energetic Extrovert Lively Persuasive |
| <p>Elephant (Green Pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cautious Meticulous Deliberate Skeptical Formal | <p>Dolphin (Blue Pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caring Nurturing Supportive Patient Relaxed |



Nigel Risner's simple animal matrix for identifying personality traits.

The other thing you really need to contend with is that communication takes place at multiple levels - the conscious, subconscious and unconscious. Furthermore, there are multiple aspects of communication, ranging from verbal to written to body language. So to master communicating effectively, you need to be conscious of all these levels and also make use of all these aspects.

Start with the basics and keep working on the different elements continuously. All of us can do better every day, therefore practice will always make things better.

TOOL 2 : THE GREEK'S TRIANGLE

The Ancient Greeks came up with three simple principles to ensure effectiveness in winning people over, and this applies even today for all aspects of communication. Whenever you are at a meeting, making a presentation, preparing a project or basically have anything to say, remember to :

- » Make sure whatever you are saying makes logical sense
- » That you are considered an 'authority' on it and have credibility, (or have someone with credibility and authority on the subject to endorse what you are saying
- » Make sure you make an emotional connection with the audience/person

Most of us are overly reliant on one or two of these aspects and don't use all three in our communication, which is one of the reasons we are not as effective as we can be!

LOGOS

Logic/ Reason/ Proof

Main technics:

Structure of the speech (opening/body/conclusion)

References to studies, statistics, case studies...

Comparisons, analogies, and metaphors,

ETHOS

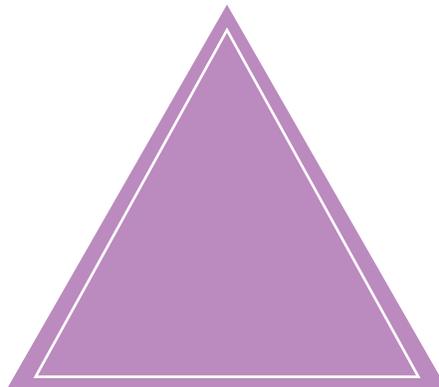
Credibility/ Trust

Main technics:

Personal branding

Confidence in delivery

Cites credible sources



PATHOS

Emotions/ Values

Main technics:

Stories

Inspirational quotes

Vivid language

PRINCIPLE 3 : ASK - NEVER ASSUME



FAR too much of communicating is based on assumptions.

How often have you heard the phrase, 'but I thought', well that's what happens when we assume and don't quite get it – everything goes horribly wrong!

So the third basic principle is to never assume and always ask.

- » Ask questions
- » Get clarifications
- » Clear your doubts

It is in your best interest to be able to do this, because ultimately, it is you who has to follow through on the instructions received.

TOOL 3 : ASKING QUESTIONS AND THE FEEDBACK LOOP

If you are the one getting instructions

- » Ask to repeat the instruction if you didn't understand (and if you are too shy to do in a meeting - do it once the meeting is done)
- » Get the timelines, requirements and other details down on a paper
- » Go back and drop a mail with what you understood so that they can get back with any changes
- » If further details are required as the task is getting done, if you need any additional information, make sure you ask for it

If you are the one giving instructions

- » Ask for the person/people to tell you what they understood the instructions to be
- » Encourage them to ask questions
- » Drop a mail with the key instructions and details - if possible offer formats etc that gets them to visually understand what you 'mean'
- » Check up on things (no - we don't mean micro managing) and ask if they want any further clarifications etc.

3 FINAL TIPS

» BE IN THE ROOM

The reason most communication fails is that people are not present. Their minds are elsewhere, and they are thinking of either the last communication they had with that person or the one that they wish they could have.

» SOME OF US ARE LISTENING – SOME OF US ARE WAITING TO RESPOND

The last three letters of the word LISTEN are TEN, so this is what we have to do ten times the amount if we want to be effective in communication, but most people are so busy thinking about their response they are in fact absent. Listen to understand, not respond!

» ASK PEOPLE QUESTIONS – LISTEN MORE AND EMPOWER YOUR TEAM TO TAKE MORE RISKS

In order to communicate well, the quality of the question we ask determines the quality of our lives. If you ask your team better questions and empower them, you will be amazed at how they will respond; in addition, the more you get out of their way the more they will fly freely.

High⁵

www.highfiveconsultancy.com



www.luminarylearningsolutions.com



ANTON THAYALAN

+94 77 22 666 22 / +94 70 40 666 66

anton@luminarylearningsolutions.com

www.luminarylearningsolutions.com