



## ***C-o-m-m-u-n-i-c-a-t-e and Connect***

by Joe Gandolfo

Communication. A daily occurrence for each and all of us as we navigate our day. We communicate with our parents, our kids, bosses, co-workers, teachers, coaches and friends - at the convenience store, restaurants, retail shops, movie theaters and doctor's offices. A myriad of daily opportunities, possibilities and countless interactions were we communicate with one another.

The verbal bridge we create with one another in the hope to be understood ourselves and hopefully to genuinely desire to understand another person. Young and old, friend to friend, new acquaintances, and especially in families – it connects us humans. How strong of bridges we are able to build with others – our ability to communicate clearly and effectively – truly is a life blood. It is a verbal oxygen exchange for our mind, emotions and spirit.

Effective communication is important for each of us. During our work life, at school, between friends, out and about, and especially within families – the more effective the communication between each other - the better the understanding and results. So how can we become better communicators in our personal, professional, student, friends and family interactions? Here are 5 tips to help, these take some effort, but they are communication *skills* that can be enhanced and strengthened:

**Listening:** The most important of all. When another person knows that you are listening and *hearing them* you have built the bridge. Truthfully, we all really want to be heard and remembering this when listening to another is invaluable.

**Eye Contact:** Maintain eye contact while talking with another person. The other person then knows you are listening.

**With Children:** Kneeling, sitting or squatting down to their eye level is powerful. Try it out for a while and notice the change in how they communicate.

**“Repeat That”:** If you did not hear what one is saying or if you do not understand what they are saying, politely pause the conversation and ask “*can you repeat that, I did not understand what you just told me*”.

**Clarity:** When you speak, do the best you can to be clear in your thoughts and to understand what you are feeling. Being clear with your thoughts and understanding your feelings, regardless of how much you share, will allow you to be better heard.

**Bonus Tip:** The Towne Lake Talkers – a new Towne Lake Toastmasters Club has recently been formed. It is a wonderful opportunity for one to learn how to communicate more effectively, think and speak quickly on one’s feet, and it helps one become more comfortable speaking to others.

Listen to Joe’s free daily podcast – ***Teen Success Radio*** – available on iTunes. His new book ***The Greatest Teenage Myth in the World*** is now available @ [www.JosephGandolfo.com](http://www.JosephGandolfo.com) or [www.TheGreatestTeenageMythInTheWorld.com](http://www.TheGreatestTeenageMythInTheWorld.com)

Joe Gandolfo is on a mission to ***champion the greatest commodity in today’s world – our youth, teenagers, young adults and college students***, and to rally, strengthen and energize the adults – parents, educators, mental health professionals and organizations - who work with and care about our greatest commodity in the world.

Joe works as a **professional speaker, success coach, seminar leader motivational counselor and author**. He brings 20 years experience working with youth, teen-agers, student-athletes, professional athletes, adults, parents, educators, public and private schools, organizations and associations.

**His clients have included:** *Georgia Tech Athletic Association, Rockdale County Schools, Cobb County Schools, Cobb Teen Leadership, YMCA, Childcare Resource Network, University of Clemson, University of West Georgia, PGA of America, Milwaukee Brewers, Coca-Cola, SouthCoast Hospitals, Owens-Corning and MPI Georgia Chapter.*

He has been an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech (1996-2000) and Georgia State (2005-06). He was on staff at the Homer Rice Center for Sports Performance (2000-07). He has had a private consulting practice since 1991.

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