Communication Mini-Secret # 6: Use Conjunctive Not Disjunctive Communication

Conjunctive communication is a form of communication that builds on previous statements. The style of communication keeps with the conversational topic and sometimes involves referring to a statement previously made.

When your words are conjunctive, you will be surprised that the person you are talking to sometimes becomes conjunctive. This occurs because your supportive communication empathically connects with them as they feel your power.

In the following example, person B demonstrates the power of conjunctive communication:

Person A: “I can't believe my friend just died.”

Person B: “Your friend passing away is devastating to you.”

A: “Yeah, it is devastating... He was so nice to me. One day he's with me as we're having a good laugh together, and the next he's gone.”

B: “Your friend was nice to you. It's such a nice thing to remember him by.”

A: “I do feel happy about remembering in that way. Though it was so sudden and I'm a little confused at the moment, I'll remember him for what good he did.”

In this example, person B is supportive because he does not find person A's emotions uncomfortable. Person B builds on person A’s statements and establishes an empathetic, supportive environment that helps them both fight in the same foxhole.

Person B is powerful with person A because his words are conjunctive. At the same time he leads person A with his statements without judging, solving, or avoiding.

Opposite to conjunctive communication is disjunctive communication which involves a statement that does not build on, or refer to, something said. If the conversation is disjunctive, it will continually change topics as two people talk about unrelated things.

Look at the following example and see why it is disjunctive:

Person A: “I can't believe my friend just died.”

Person B: “Overtime, you’ll work through it.”

A: “I don't know if I will! He's just gone!”

B: “Come on. You'll be stronger.”

A: “I feel so weak at the moment...”

B: “Hey, let's hit the gym!”

A: “Argh! I'm so angry!”
This second example is an awful example of supportive communication as person B has no power from his inability to connect with person A. The conversation goes nowhere constructive – it even goes backwards as the reassuring and advising barriers distance the two persons from each other.

Person B could be feeling uncomfortable, he could have a negative optimism, or he is just unaware of the problems with reassuring. For whatever reason person B's communication is disjunctive, he creates a complete disconnect as he avoids the problem.

Supportive communication is conjunctive because it builds on what the person has said in an empathetic manner. Person B in the first example has used statements to be conjunctive, but the triad of healthy conversations involves close-ended questions, open-ended questions, and statements which you can use to make your communication conjunctive (Discussed in detail in Communication Secrets of Powerful People).

Ask the occasional close-ended question (though be sure to remember the limitations they create with a funneling-process), ask open-ended questions, and use statements that build on something the person previously said. When you use the triad of healthy conversations, you can be truly supportive.

Another fascinating aspect of conjunctive and disjunctive communication in being supportive is the use of “and” and “but”. Always be aware of how you use the “but” word because it can create disjunctive communication by negating what you previously said. “I appreciate your efforts, but I'd like you to...” is an example of a person being praised and their praise getting negated because of “but”.

Transform your “buts” into “ands” so that your communication is more conjunctive. Our example therefore gets transformed into: “I appreciate your efforts and I'd like you to...” What a powerful change in semantics.

This mini-secret is an excerpt from Communication Secrets of Powerful People, which contains 300+ pages of the most effective techniques to communicate with anyone, persuade people and master your relationships. Click Here to learn more.