

Curiosity & Clarification

Give up that you know!

"It's not what you say that makes the sale,
it's what you hear." **Tony Mayo**

Establish the habit of slowing down your responses to questions, to save time and trouble. A simple and effective way to do this is by training yourself to respond to every question with a clarifying question. This gives the questioner a chance to explain why they asked and what they are trying to accomplish. You'll be surprised how often the quick answer you might have given would not have helped them --or you-- at all.

Suppose, for example, you shipped that big report yesterday, just as you had promised. Today the client telephones and asks, "Have you sent that report yet?" Simple yes or no question, right? Maybe not. If you say "Yes, I did." their response is "Thanks. Good bye." If instead, you invite the client to clarify by asking, "There's a reason you happened to ask me about that just now?", the client might say: "I'm going to be in your building today, so I thought I might pick it up." or "I was hoping to make a change to the requirements before it went out." or "You promised it yesterday and I don't have it yet, so [a. I hate you. or b. I hate my mailroom. or c. My boss told me to pester you.]" or any of a hundred other clarifications. Aren't these things you would like to know? How much communication are you blocking with your reflexive responses?

People love to be heard. Draw them out by responding with clarifying questions. It will help them to speak and remind you to listen.

For the rest of today, at work and at home, each time you hear a question, remember: amplify before answering.

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."
Stephen Covey *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

"It's not the things you don't know
what gets you into trouble.
"It's the things you do know
that just ain't so."

Will Rogers