Communication & Leadership

HRD*
THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

When Communication Misses

Recall a time when communication did not accomplish its goal.

Notes:

Connecting to Prior Experience

Recall a time you were trying to learn or understand something new and had difficulty making a connection to the information.

Describe the disconnect (do not include how it was fixed):

Two Truths About Prior Knowledge

1. Everyone has prior knowledge.

2. New learning builds on what is already there.

Strategy #1 – Use Concrete Analogies

_____ is like _____.

Notes:

Strategy #2 – Create Enriched Environments

Notes:

Strategy #3 – Ask More Questions

Types of Bridge-Building Questions:

Diagnostic Questions:

- What's your familiarity with…?
- What's been your experience with…?

Clarifying Questions:

- How are you thinking about this?
- What part feels unclear?

Forward-Moving Questions:

- How would you approach this?
- What do you think we should try next?

Stop-Guessing Lab

Think of a real communication situation you are in right now.

Write it in one sentence:

Before you explain, consider:

- What does this person likely already know?
- What might they not know?
- What am I assuming they know?

In your group, design:

1. One diagnostic question (to uncover prior knowledge)

2. One clarifying question (to understand perspective)

3. One enriched element (story, analogy, visual, example, etc.)

Important: In the real conversation, open with a question—not an explanation!

Three Core Concepts

- Analogies make ideas clearer.
- Enriched environments make ideas stick.
- Questions make ideas relevant.

Relevance determines whether communication lands.

When communication misses, it's usually not because we didn't say enough. It's because we didn't connect first.