Six Effective Communication Tips

Good communication skills can be a tremendous asset in all aspects of your life. How can you improve your communication skills? The following tips can help you to communicate more clearly.

1. **Look for Verbal/Non-Verbal Contrasts**
   Check to see if the other person's words match their nonverbal gestures. Research indicates that when words fail to match up with nonverbal behavior, people tend to ignore what is said and focus on nonverbal expressions of moods, thoughts, and emotions instead.

2. **Be Aware of your Own Vocal Tone**
   When speaking, your tone of voice says a great deal about the emotions you're really feeling during a conversation. Pay attention to how your tone affects how others respond to you and the emotions they express in return. Remember, what comes back to us from others is indicative of what we have originally put out.

3. **Make Good Eye Contact**
   If you fail to make good eye contact, it sends a message that you are either evading something, hiding something, or simply not interested in the current discussion. Eye contact is critical to communication. Practice your eye contact skills by making eye contact in four to five second intervals. Keeping eye contact with the other person will also help keep your attention on them as well. It also stops your mind from wandering.

4. **Make Your Communication More Effective and Meaningful**
   Verbal and nonverbal communication skills work together in conveying your message. You can improve your spoken words by using nonverbal gestures that reinforce and support what you are saying. Remember, your whole body, as well as your mind, is a constant and powerful channel for communication.

5. **Give Your Full Attention**
   We might think we can multi-task, especially during a conversation. Divided attention is actually no attention. As humans, we really can only focus on one thing at a time. During a conversation, minimize potential distractions within and without. Listening is an active process of trying to understand what someone else is saying. Listening is not a passive, quiet moment when you are just waiting until it's your turn to talk again.

6. **Clarification is Critical for Effective Communication**
   Check in with your listener to make sure that your message is being understood as intended, and never assume that your listener has the same knowledge or interest in a subject as you. Your audience will listen and absorb your information when you present it in their terms. Communicate to your audience using their interests, experiences and background.