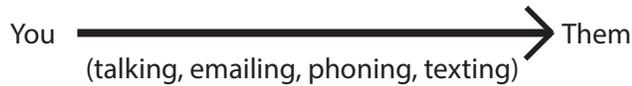


Week 28: Effectively Communicating One-On-One

One question we often receive about communication is, "How do I get people to communicate with me one-on-one?" Many people are confident in their ability to facilitate communication in meetings, but in one-on-one meetings they struggle to shift from a "talking to" conversation to a "talking with" conversation. Many leaders fall into this dilemma, believing it is their job to be the authority, know the "truth," and have all the answers. Therefore, they often have little practice genuinely engaging with others in their organization. To help you think about how to change that, let us tell you how we think about communication.

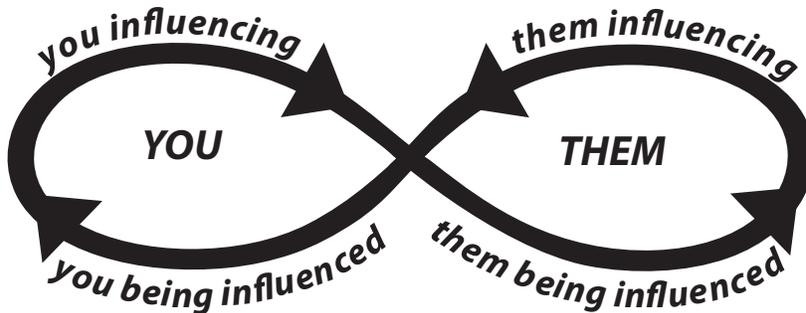
Often, communication is thought of as something you do to others, e.g., "I communicate to them," and we diagram those conversations like this:



Genuine and effective communication is a process of mutual influence and looks more like this:



Or as we see it:



They learn what you are thinking

You learn what they are thinking

As you can see, this forms the infinity symbol; and when communications are going well, you create an upward spiral that leads to infinite possibilities.



Coaching Exercise: Effectively Communicating One-on-One

In the next week, when you are in a one-on-one conversation with someone, think about this concept. Provide them a short and clear summary of what you are thinking, then pause and listen as they tell you what they are thinking. This may mean waiting an extra second or two for them to really believe you are interested in their thoughts. Let it in, let it influence you, and then teach them what—given their input—you are now thinking and then listen for what they are thinking, and keep the cycle going for as long as it feels productive.

To aid in your reflection, answer the following questions:

1. What can you listen for in conversation with another person that might let you know they are saying something that they want you to understand?
Example: Weighty pauses, tone of voice, key words are all things I have found clue me in to what people are saying.

2. How does it feel to be listened to?
Example: It feels good to be listened to (or, conversely, it feels suffocating at times to have co-workers hyperanalyze what I say).

3. How do you think you can let your conversation partner know that you are listening?
Example: Contributing reflection and minimal encouragements ("I see," "uh-huh," "go on," etc.) will help me put people at ease.

