

The Lukaszewski Group

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Crisis Management, Leadership
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COMMUNICATING INTENTIONALLY

Sidebar to the Lukaszewski 40 Years in PR story
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Over the years, I've developed a very powerful and helpful communication philosophy. At the same time, this approach defines my ethical approach to life, to work and to trouble. I call these "intentions" because this how I seek to operate my life every day, and to teach others to do the same.

1. ***Candor – Truth with an attitude, delivered now (the foundation blocks of trust).***
 - Disclose, announce early.
 - Explain reasoning and reasons.
 - Discuss options, alternatives considered.
 - Provide unsolicited helpful information.
2. ***Openness, accessibility – Be available for the disasters as well as the ribbon cuttings.***
 - Be available.
 - Be willing to respond.
3. ***Truthfulness – Truth is 15% facts and data, 85% emotion and point-of-reference.***
 - Point of reference matters more than facts.
 - Factual overload victimizes people and makes them feel stupid, therefore angrier.
 - Unconditional honesty, from the start.
4. ***Apology – The atomic energy of empathy. Apologies stop just about everything, including litigation.***
 - Verbalize or write a statement of personal regret, remorse, and sorrow.
 - Acknowledge personal responsibility for having injured, insulted, failed, or wronged another.
 - Humbly ask for forgiveness in exchange for more appropriate future behavior and to make amends in return.
5. ***Responsiveness – Answering questions relentlessly in every situation validates your integrity.***
 - Every concern or question, regardless of the source, is legitimate and must be addressed.
 - Answer every question; avoid judging the questioner.

- Avoid taking any question personally.
 - Build followers and be nice, even in the face of anger or aggressive negativity. Anger and arrogance create plaintiffs.
6. ***Empathy – Action always speaks louder than words.***
- Action illustrates concern, sensitivity, and compassion.
 - Act as though it was happening to you or someone you care about.
 - It is literally impossible to put yourself in someone else’s shoes in any meaningful way, from the victim’s perspective.
7. ***Transparency – No secrets (because important things and stupid stuff always comes out.)***
- Our behavior, our attitude, our plans, even our strategic discussions are unchallengeable, positive, and explainable.
 - Our families would be comfortable reading about our actions, decisions, and discussions on the front page of tomorrow’s newspaper.
8. ***Engagement – Face-to-face is the communications approach desired by just about everyone and every victim.***
- Those who challenge us most will require aggressive positive interaction.
 - Our base and those who give us permission to operate expect us to deal with unconvinced and victims.
 - Direct interactive response, even negotiation, empowers the initiator.
9. ***Destiny Management – It’s your destiny, which only you can manage in your own best interest.***
- Manage your own destiny, or you’ll find someone waiting on the sidelines to do it for you.
 - Relentlessly correct and clarify the record.
 - Prompt, positive, constructive elaboration of the facts preempts critics and empowers employees and supporters.

You can call this anything you like: communications policy, communication guidelines. I like the word intentions because it signifies that we are fully engaged in communicating in the most effective, honest, empathetic and open manner possible, all the time. This behavior can lead to an extraordinarily interesting and useful life.