FAMILY TALK: Making It Work for Farm and Ranch Families

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What do you hope to gain from this presentation?

When you leave here today, how will you know that this presentation has been useful for you?



Communication

- Builds or breaks relationships
- Is a process in which each person is both a speaker and listener at the same time



HOW you say it counts more than WHAT you say!

7% WORDS

38% TONE OF VOICE

HOW

55% BODY LANGUAGE

100% TOTAL MESSAGE



How do I get someone to communicate differently?

- The only thing you can change is how YOU communicate
 - How you listen
 - How you act
 - How you react
 - How you interact



The big R

RESPECT



Respect

On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate yourself on demonstrating respect toward your family?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I don't show respect I always show respect

How do you demonstrate respect in your family communication?



Thinking Critically About Our Nonverbal Messages

- Analyze your own nonverbal behavior.
- Observe. Observe. Observe.
- Resist temptation to draw conclusions from nonverbal behaviors.
- Connect and relate.



"To have great interpersonal communication, there must be great listeners as well as great talkers."

-Joseph A. DeVito



How to become a more effective listener

- Always show respect for the speaker.
- Know when to be a passive listener.
- Know when to be an active listener.
 - Paraphrase the speaker's meaning.
 - Express understanding of speaker's feelings.
 - Ask questions.



Effective listening will result in increasing your ability to...

- Learn about others, the world around you, and yourself, so as to avoid problems and make more reasonable decisions.
- Relate to others.
- Influence the attitudes and behaviors of others.
- Play.
- Help others.



Listening

On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate yourself on listening to what your family members are saying?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I don't listen

What ways do you listen to your family?
How do your family members know you are listening?



Three Ways to Respond to Bids for Communication

- Turning—toward responses.
- Turning—away responses.
- Turning—against responses.



You NEVER pay attention to me at home. YOU come in the house after chores and go straight to the computer. YOU seem to care more about your silly computer than me. YOU really make me feel lousy.





I get frustrated when we don't pay attention to one another. I really appreciate spending time together at the end of the day and talking about what has happened rather than going off and doing separate activities like you going to the computer and me cooking dinner.



Handling Tough Times

"WHEN this happens..."

"I FEEL this way ..."

"Because..."



Communication Roadblocks

- Advising
- Competing
- Distracting
- Dreamers
- Filtering
- Gunnysacking

- Identifying
- Ignoring
- Name Calling
- Placating
- Sarcasm
- Pursue/withdraw



Two Surprisingly Simple Truths for Married Couples

Happily married couples behave like good friends.

Happily married couples handle their conflicts in gentle, positive ways.

Wait ... what about engaging 'reluctant' persons connected to our ag operation?

Family Business Communication

- Family System
 - Emotion
 - Inward orientation
 - Slow change
 - Goal is to maintain harmony, nurture, develop good adult citizens (transfer values)

- Mgmnt Ownership Systems
 - Outward orientation
 - Rapid change
 - Merit based
 - Goal is to generate profit, develop skills, pass on the business, etc

Why might some persons be reluctant to communicate about farm/ranch managem't?

- ? Attitudes values
- ? Knowledge and skills
- ? Spiritual values
- ? Work ethic
- ? Emotional and Physical Health
- ? Educational level
- ? Other family members

One more important factor....

Dealing with
Change

(or fear of change)

How does change usually occur?

- Status quo or 'business as usual'
- Resistance as change becomes necessary
- Chaos as change is occurring
- Integration as change is gradually adopted
- New status quo

Status quo

Family members:

- know what to expect.
- know how to react.
- know how to behave.
- know unspoken and spoken rules in the farming operation.

What shakes up status quo?

Family members:

- fight among themselves.
- blame each other.
- are dissatisfied with current state of affairs.
- are unhappy.
- may withdraw from family interaction.
- are agreeable only to avoid family conflict.

2nd stage of Change: Resistance

- Something happens that requires a response different from the status quo (e.g. family blowup, crop failure, financial or health problem, divorce, death....)
- Typical response is to deny, avoid, or blame.
- Unconscious physical responses might be shallow breathing and closed posture.

What helps during the resistance stage?

- Resistant members need help in how to overcome denying, avoiding, or blaming.
- They need help opening up and becoming aware.

What helps? What hinders?

- Take time for simple conversation without judging the other's point of view.
- Take time to listen with sincerity. Avoid interrupting and telling the other person that he/she is wrong.
- Slow down the conversation.
- Discover what everyone cares about.

3rd Stage of Change: Chaos

Old expectations may not be valid.

Old reactions may not be effective.

Old behaviors may not be possible.

Chaos (continued)

- Feelings may be on a roller coaster ride.
- Relationships may be strained.
- Anxiousness and vulnerability may occur.
- Farm productivity or individual productivity may decline during this time.
- Everything seems a mess.

What helps? What hinders?

Allow feelings to be expressed. In fact, use conversation starters that help feelings be expressed.

Example: "How does it make you feel when someone says, "????????????"

Avoid saying: "You shouldn't feel that way. After all, it makes sense." • Allow feelings to be expressed. In fact, use conversation starters that help feelings be expressed.

Example: "How does it make you feel when someone says, "????????????"

Avoid saying: "You shouldn't feel that way. After all, it makes sense."

"One of the easiest human acts is also the most healing. Listening to someone. Simply listening. Not advising or coaching, but silently and fully listening. Margaret J. Wheatley

This also may be the time to reach out to other support systems. Examples: "Shall we go talk to our banker together?" 'Shall we call the Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services and see what they have to say?"

4th Stage of change: Integration

- Awareness of new possibilities emerges.
- Fears subside.
- New expectations and behaviors begin to surface. Example: Family decides to have a family meeting to begin thinking about a consensus vision for their farming operation.

5th Stage of Change: New Status Quo

- Sense of accomplishment surrounds the family.
- Future possibilities are more easily shared.
- Family members feel safe in their opinions and relationships with each other.
- Family members have greater awareness and respect for each other's feelings.

Perhaps future changes will come a little easier to farm/ranch families who have moved through these stages successfully.

However, it takes practice and vigilance to not retreat to old behaviors.

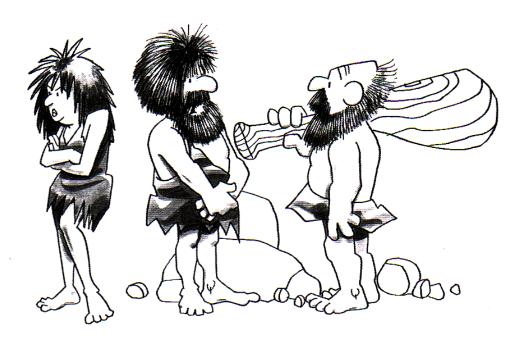
One more thing....

Remember to enjoy each other and to regularly show appreciation to each other!!

Communication Skills Reflection

- What are you doing well?
- What's worked well in the past that can help inform you today?
- What has not worked well in the past or is not working well currently?
- What can you do differently?





"We only learned to talk yesterday, and now we're not speaking."

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Brief Survey

As a result of this program, I am likely to use more positive nonverbal behaviors with my family members.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!



As a result of this program, I am likely to use more effective listening and speaking skills with my family members.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!



As a result of this program, I am likely to talk and listen more respectfully during disagreements with family members.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!



As a result of this program, I am likely to use helpful communication strategies when 'change' is necessary in our farming/ranching operation.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!

As a result of this program, I am likely to show appreciation more often to each of my family members.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!



As a result of this program, I am more likely to encourage enjoyable family activities.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I'm there already!



