

# Developing Interpersonal Skills In Business English



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Developing Business English Teachers - EVO 2014

# Interpersonal Skills in Business English

## Challenges

- Integrate verbal, non verbal, behavioral and cultural elements
- Context: planned and unplanned

## Possible Training Solutions

- Awareness
- Quick Response Capacity
- Communication strategies



# Effective Listening



- Focus
- Listen with “all senses”
- Be careful: distractions and assumptions

## ENCOURAGE

Non verbal

Verbal

## OBSERVE

Speaker's  
body language

attitudes

## LISTEN

Assumptions

Tone of Voice

# Active Listening in Class

## The Power of Listening

- Split group in Speakers and Listeners. Tell S to wait outside.
- Inform L that , instead of signals of encouragement, they put up their hands 2 “. They have to remain silent.
- Inform S they will talk for 3’ about a positive experience.
- Debrief: Ask S how they felt while talking (emotions felt, etc) *“I didn’t feel listened to, didn’t know why she put up her hand, I lost myself and didn’t know how to continue with the story”*..
- Discuss the importance of listening.

## Active Listening and Discussion: In pairs (or 3)

S: speaks for 3’ on a topic of interest

L: is active . If not, S stops and waits for encouragement

L summarizes and S corrects

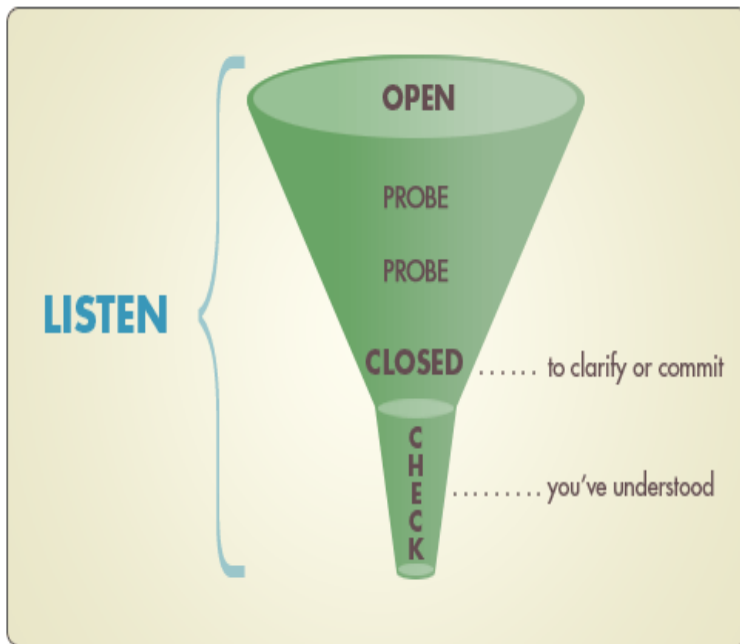
3<sup>rd</sup>: listens and feedbacks at the end

## The Witches of Glum: Assumptions

Reading and a T/F exercise to:

- To illustrate the dangers of making assumptions.
- To provoke discussion about prejudices and stereotypes.

# Effective Questions: The Funnel



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>T.E.D (tell, explain, Describe)</b> | Please, <b>describe</b> us what happened with the product<br>Could you <b>tell me</b> where you bought the machine? |
| <b>Probing</b>                         | What <b>exactly</b> went wrong?   |
| <b>Clarifying/ Developmental</b>       | When you say... you mean...?<br>Could you expand on that?   |
| <b>Hypothetical</b>                    | If you could choose another model, which one would you prefer?  |
| <b>Leading</b>                         | Product A is very efficient, <b>don't you think?</b> Option 2 is better, isn't it?                                  |
| <b>Closing</b>                         | OK , are we finished?<br>So, will you accept the new version?   |

TED+Probing+Close

# Activities

## **Scenarios:**

“You were not able to attend an important meeting. Ask your boss about it, you want details”.

- a) Question type: ....
- b) the question.

**The Hot Seat Funnel:** Assign roles (a celebrity/ a football team). Arrange the class in semi circle. Using the funnel, the group asks questions to gather information.

**The power of questions.** In pairs.

- S 1 begins by asking S 2 an open-end question.
- S 2 answers the question, then asks S 1 a related, open-end question.
- This continues, back and forth, until one S gets stumped.
- Debrief: each student tries to grab control of the conversation from the other by asking questions. Who controls conversations?

❖ **FEEDBACK:** verbal, non verbal, attitude

# Communicating Assertively

## Passive

- Afraid to speak up.
- Uses hesitant language
- Speaks softly.
- Avoids eye contact.
- Slouches, shifts weight from one foot to the other.

## Assertive

- Speaks openly
- Clear, direct language
- Listens actively and responds in agreement or not.
- Conversational tone, a clear steady voice.
- Stands straight, steady
- Eye contact.

## Aggressive

- Talks over others.
- Undermines the rights of others
- Speaks loudly, shouts.
- Stands rigidly, puts hands on hips, arms crossed
- Glaring eyes.
- **PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE**

**By communicating assertively, a person is reliable and self-confident, can build strong relationships, influence people and work in teams.**

# Language of Assertiveness

## Empathic Statements

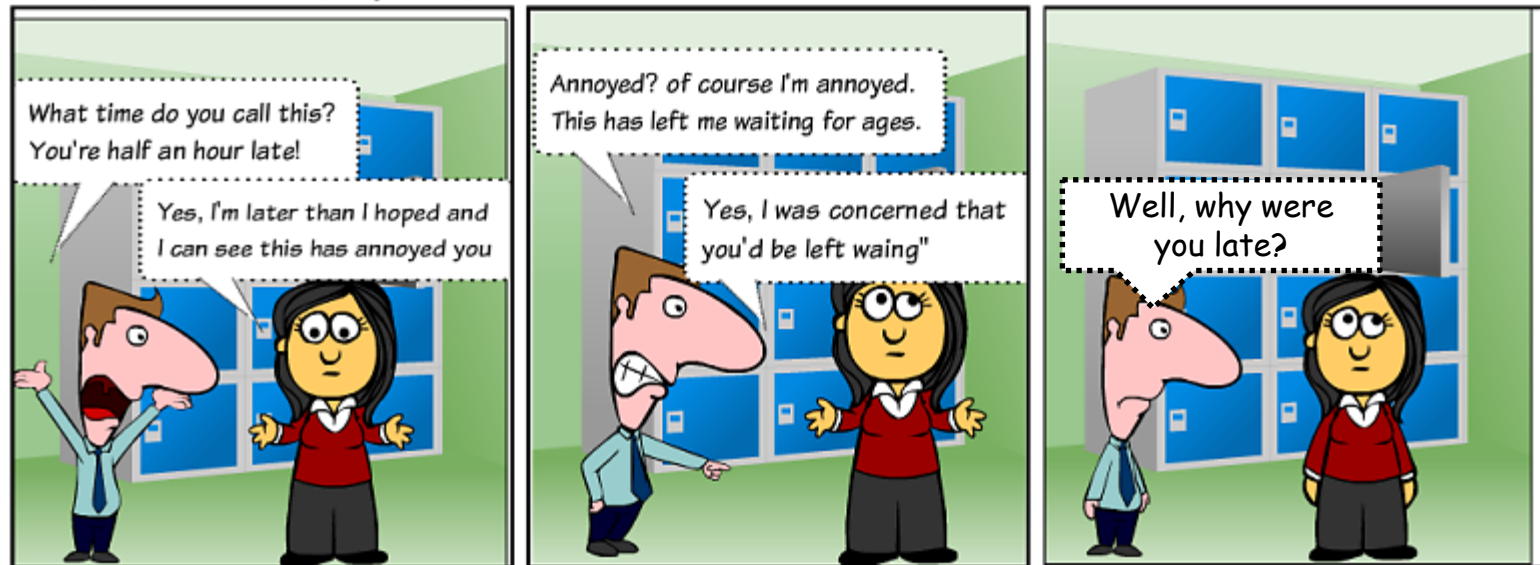
1. Recognize the other person's views:
  - *I understand you are having trouble working with Arlene.*
2. Then, express what you need:
  - *...however, this project needs to be completed by Friday. Let's all sit down and come up with a plan to get it done.*



# Fogging Technique

**FOGGING - BY DANAPOKLEPOVIC**

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- Recognize the other person statement
- Express your need, position
- Give a **calm response while not agreeing to the demand**
- A wall of fog

# Activities

## **Emotions.** Groups of 3.

In turns, each Student communicates an emotion with non verbal language. The other two try to guess which emotion is being communicated.

## **The Chair**

Ask a student who is able to behave assertively to sit on a chair in the middle of the room. Assign behavior types to other 3: assertive, passive, aggressive. Goal: to persuade the student on the chair to relinquish the chair. (timing)

## **The Traffic Light**

In pairs. Distribute one card to each participant.

Each cards contains part of a situation (a threat) and a color code. Participants cannot see each other's cards.

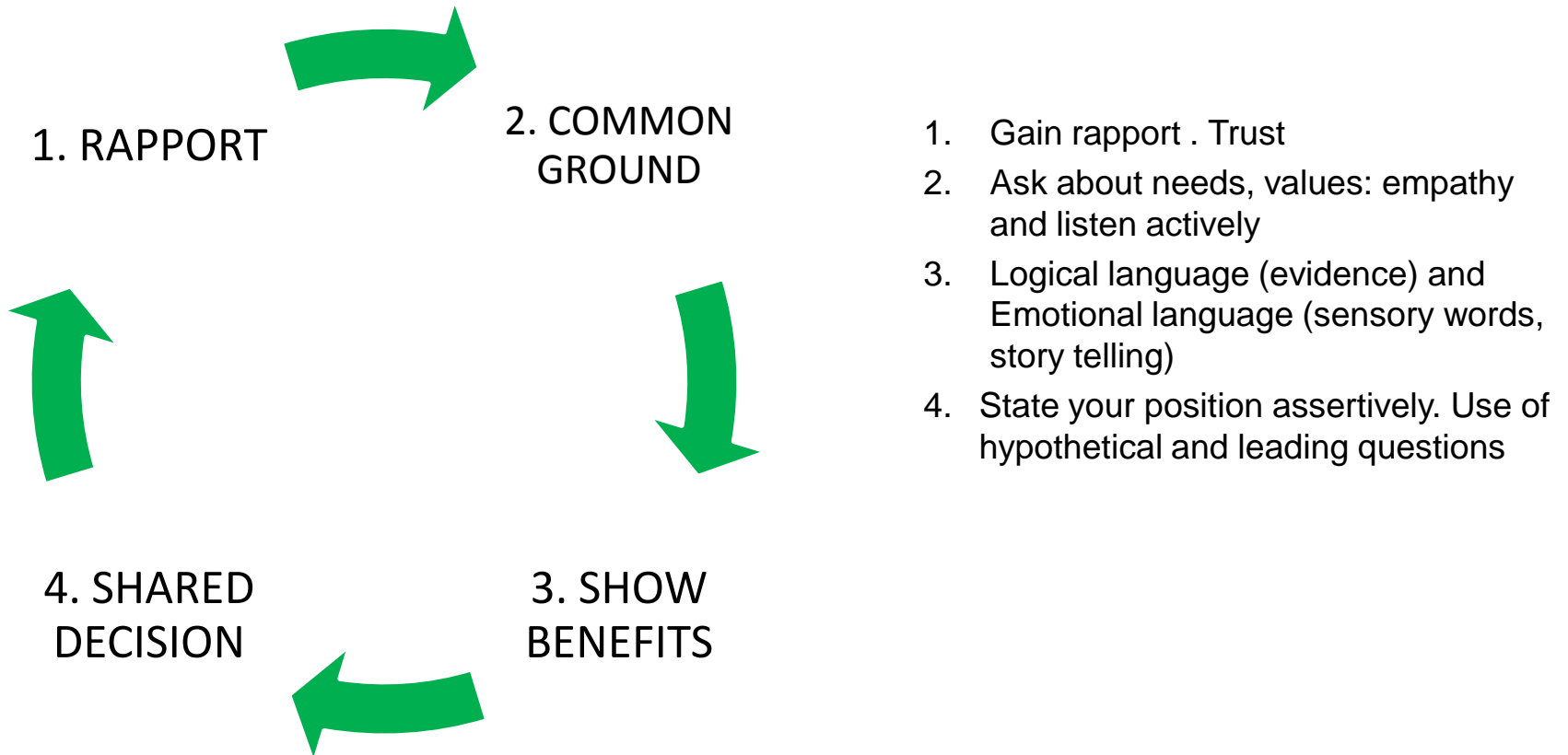


You are at a bar and have asked for a beer but the waitress brought you a glass of wine. You start the conversation. Color: RED  
You work in a bar as a waitress. You are having a very sad day. You've just taken a glass of wine to a man. Color: YELLOW.

# COMMUNICATING PERSUASIVELY

- **We are closing in 5', come back tomorrow**
- **You must have been dealing with Bob... he's off the week now. You'd better wait till Monday.**

# THE WHEEL



# Activities

- **Scenarios: to use the Wheel**

1. You must have been dealing with Bob... he's off the week now. You'd better wait till Monday.
2. The system is down now due to maintenance so there is nothing I can do to help you at the moment.

- **“The Parcel”**

- Goal: convince your partner of taking care of a parcel for some days. Partner: doubtful, hesitant, resistance.
- In large groups: pass on the parcel and convince the S by your side to accept it. If S is not convinced, the persuader goes out. Winner: the S without the parcel.



# Takeaways...

## Interpersonal Skills techniques

- Integrate elements of communication
- Raise awareness
- QRC
- Context

## Application in Class:

- “*as it is*” or adapted
- Supplement a course book

*Thank you for your attention!*

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