

'A must read for any aspiring executives looking to improve  
their professional communication skills.'

*Gordon Tobin, Head of Global Sales University, LinkedIn*



# THE **COMMUNICATION** BOOK

How to say it, mean it  
and make it matter

Emma Ledden

# **Praise for *The Communication Book***

'I've really enjoyed dipping in and out of *The Communication Book*, and found lots of really useful ideas and concepts that I either hadn't seen before or had totally forgotten about!

'I think that is where the real strength of this book lies, insofar as much of it is common sense stuff that when you read it you feel like you intuitively know it already, but with the constant distractions of home and work getting in our way every day, we quickly forget about the advice that Emma provides with such clarity.

'Giving feedback – especially when the message is a difficult one – can be something that strikes fear into the most experienced of managers, and Emma's book gives everyone a clear and concise guide on how to navigate these difficult waters with honesty and empathy.'

*Georgina Farrell, Human Resources Director*

'Emma Ledden is a proven expert in the field of communication and this is a must read for any aspiring executives looking to improve their professional communication skills.'

*Gordon Tobin, Head of Global Sales University, LinkedIn*

'Insightful, practical and easy to follow. Another great read by Emma Ledden. This book leads the charge on how to communicate effectively.'

*Mairead Fleming, Managing Director, Brightwater Recruitment Specialists*

'Emma's new book, *The Communication Book*, demonstrates that by using her techniques in their career search, readers will be able to clinch that next role by communicating their personal brand and selling themselves much more effectively to their chosen company.

'*The Communication Book* encapsulates all that is good about Emma's style and personality together with the passion she has for making you, the reader, the best you can be in communicating effectively with your chosen audience. The three-step approach in preparation before you speak is at the heart of it all.'

*Michael McDonnell, MBA Programme Manager,  
UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School*

Let's go back to Philip and see how the feedback conversation would go if the EEC feedback model was used. The manager begins:

*'Hi Philip. How are you? Is your current project going well and on target? How do you find working with the current team?'*

From this the manager learns that Philip feels his current team leader is a bit domineering but he likes the team in general. He is very busy and wants to ensure the client is always happy. He has also told his manager he has a personal issue he is dealing with, but he doesn't wish to talk about it today.

Armed with this information, the manager continues:

### **Event**

*'Philip, you are a very valuable team member and we are very happy with how you have been working with the client. However, for the past four team meetings you have arrived between 15 and 30 minutes late, you have not prepared your update in advance (including not using the proper templates) and when your other team members are speaking you are on your blackberry the whole time. Are you aware of this?'*

### **Effect**

*'This behaviour is having an impact on your team and on the meetings. You are overrunning on your time slot to speak, meaning other people have to rush their own update or the meeting runs over. Also, being on your phone shows a level of disinterest and disrespect to the other speakers at the meeting. Can you see that from the team's point of view?'*

### **Change**

*'Philip, as I said at the beginning, you are a valuable team member and we would like to support you in every way we can. Do you agree, from here on in, you will commit to arriving on time to every team meeting, preparing your update fully, and finally can you please commit to not bringing your phone into the meeting? Thanks Philip.'*

# The facts about feedback

Giving and receiving feedback is a vital skill in your communication tool-kit. It is not an easy conversation, and that is why you must be ready for it.

You do, of course, have to give the feedback no matter what, so don't shy away from it at the last minute. Be clear, calm and confident in your information and empathetic yet assertive in your attitude. Remember the purpose of feedback is to help and support someone's career development. Feedback is a good thing, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel.

## FEEDBACK NEEDS TO:

- **Be at the right time:** give feedback as close to the event as possible.
- **Ask them for their story first:** ask them what happened and let them tell their story.
- **Be behaviour-related:** focus on visible actions and behaviours, not general character traits. Give specific examples during your feedback.
- **Explain the impact:** explain the impact that their actions and behaviour had on the team, the client or the work.
- **Check for clear understanding:** check they understand the feedback. Also ensure you understand their viewpoint.
- **Discuss future solutions:** ensure they know what actions and behaviours you expect in the future.

If you are the one on the receiving end of feedback, remember you are likely to experience SARA. Here are a few things to remember:

1. Don't take it personally – make sure you focus on the facts.
2. Ask lots of questions to make sure you understand.

3. Don't make excuses – listen to understand.
4. Make sure your self-image stays positive.
5. Focus on the future and what you can improve.

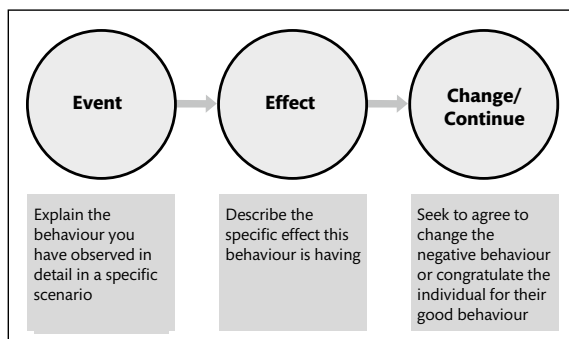
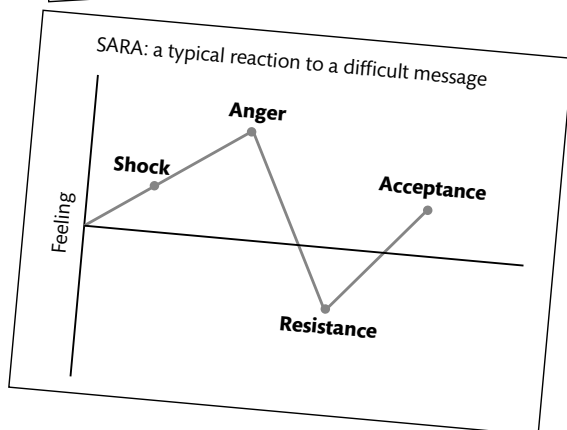
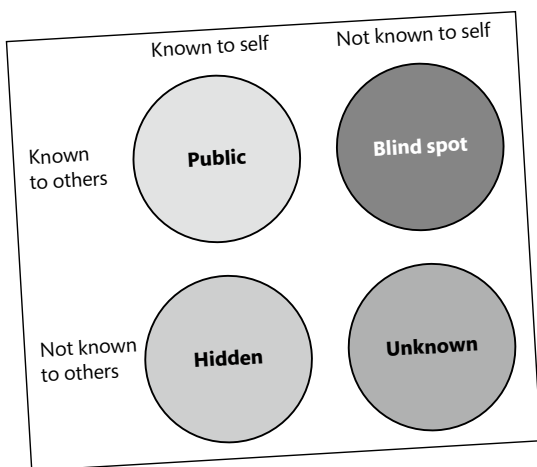
## What's in it for you?

Giving negative feedback is a difficult interaction for everyone. It is going to generate an emotional response in the other person, no matter how well it is done. Accept this.

If you have people who work for you it is your responsibility to make them aware of their blind spots – both the positive and negative behaviours they are not aware of.

My best advice is to make it about them as much as possible, rather than making it about you. Give good solid examples of the behaviour, give them a chance to speak first and, most importantly, allow them to feel their way through it.

# Chapter cheat sheet





# Communicating without words