Lesson 4-4 (Handouts & Worksheets)

MODULATING INTENSITY

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS
Variation of Intensity

Before formulating our communications methods, we first need to decide the intensity of the need to communicate our specific wants or needs. Situations and circumstances vary in intensity, so it is only natural that the intensity in the firmness of our requests and responses should vary to fit. If we see most situations as very intense, and communicate with that level of intensity, we risk having those we talk with see us as over-reacting or unbending and therefore feel they can ignore our wishes and needs. If we view most of our situations as very low intensity and communicate with that level, we risk being unheard because the importance of our need is not communicated. If most of our situations are seen by us as in the moderate zone, then when we communicate with a higher intensity we are more likely to be heard.

Sometimes how you answer a request made of you can be flexible, depending on the situation. Other times saying ‘Yes’ is just not possible, or not a healthy option under the specific circumstances. If you simply can’t reasonably answer ‘yes’, that would be a time that you would respond with a higher intensity. Just as you can say ‘No’ to requests others make with different levels of determination, you can also make requests of others with varying intensities and determination.

When discussing the intensity of the situation, and the intensity of the resulting communication, many conclude that the measuring tool most reasonable to use would be our feelings. Many believe that if they are intensely upset about something, their response or request should be communicated with equal intensity. This is not true! For effective communication, the circumstantial intensity is best measured by thought, not feelings. This does not mean that we suppress our feelings, because the emotions need to be felt and worked through; this just does not mean that the emotion requires an action.

Determining communication intensity should be done through a deliberated process to help you decide which level of intensity would be in your best interest in this specific situation. Be intentional!

There are several factors that should be taken into consideration in this process. Applying an intensity value to these factors, then considering their sum level of the situation, can help you to come up with an average to determine the intensity (i.e. firmness) that would be the most effective as your response.
OPTIONS FOR INTENSITY

ASKING

0 – Don’t Ask, Don’t Hint
1 – Hint Indirectly, Accept No
2 – Hint Openly, Accept No
3 – Ask Tentatively, Accept No
4 – Ask Firmly, Accept No
5 – Ask Firmly, Resist No
6 – Ask Firmly, Insist

ANSWERING ‘NO’

0 – Do What Is Requested
1 – Express Hesitancy, Say Yes
2 – Express Unwillingness, Say Yes
3 – Express Unwillingness, Decide
4 – Refuse Firmly, But Reconsider
5 – Refuse Firmly, Resist Giving In
6 – Refuse Firmly, Don’t Give In

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INTENSITY FACTORS

Interpersonal effectiveness requires that we think through how appropriate it is to ask for something in a specific situation or when it is advisable to say no to a request. The factors that we should consider in making that determination:

1) Effectiveness Goals/Priorities
   - Objectives
   - Relationships
   - Self-Respect

2) Capability

3) Timeliness

4) Homework

5) Authority

6) Rights

7) Relationship

8) Reciprocity

9) Long versus short term

10) Respect
1) Effectiveness Goals/Priorities

OBJECTIVES Effectiveness (Getting What You Want)

- Getting someone to do something you want.
- Refusing an unreasonable, or unwanted request.
- Convincing someone to take your opinion or point of view seriously.
- Resolving an Interpersonal Conflict.

Questions to Ask Yourself:
- Is what I want within my legitimate right?
- What exactly do I want from this interaction?
- What do I have to do to get the results I want?
- Am I willing to make a sacrifice that might be required in negotiations?

* If in this situation objectives are very important; the intensity of the response or request should be higher.

RELATIONSHIP Effectiveness

- Behaving in a way that earns the respect of the other person
- Acting in a way that causes the other person to like you and desire a relationship with you
- Reminding yourself of why this relationship is important to you- both now and in the future

Questions to Ask Yourself:
- What do I need to do to get or keep this relationship?
- How do I want the other person to feel about me?
  ~How will the current interaction affect that feeling?

* Is this a time that I am willing to trade an objective for keeping the other person happy. If so; the intensity of the response should be lower.

SELF-RESPECT Effectiveness (Increasing Self-Approval / Self-Appreciation)

- Respecting your own beliefs
- Sticking to your values
- Behaving in keeping with your moral standards
- Act in a way that increases your feeling of effectiveness and capability

Questions to Ask Yourself:
- How do I want to feel about myself?
  ~How will the current interaction affect that feeling?
- What do I have to do to feel that way about myself?

*To build or maintain self-respect, a more intense response may be needed; depending on the behavior in question and the anticipated final outcome.
2) Capability

**Consider before making a request:**

- Does the person I am making the request of have the ability to do what I am asking?
- Does the person have the resources needed to say, ‘Yes’ to my request?
* If they have what is wanted or needed, or the ability to do what is asked; the intensity should be higher.
* If they do not have what is wanted or needed, or the ability to do what is asked; the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**

- Do I have what is being asked of me?
- Am I able to do what is being requested?
* If I am able to do what is requested, and have the resources to answer ‘Yes’; the intensity should be lower
* If I do not have (and, therefore cannot give or do) what the other person wants; the intensity should be higher.

3) Timeliness

**Consider before making a request:**

- Is this a good time to make this request of the other person?
- Are they in an interested, attentive mood?
- Are they in a good mood?
- Are they well rested?
* If the person is in the “mood” for attentively listening, it is more likely that they will say ‘yes’ to a request; so the intensity should be higher.
* If they are tired, hungry, under stress, or anything which could affect their mood and the attention they are able to give to your request; the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**

- Is this a bad time for me to agree to a request?
- Am I already overwhelmed, or emotionally unregulated?
- Is this a bad time for me to say ‘No’?
* If this is a bad time for me to agree to a request; the intensity should be higher.
* If this is not the best time for me to say ‘No’ or I am able and willing to say “Yes”; the Intensity should be lower.
4) Homework

**Consider before making a request:**

- Have I taken the time to gather all the facts that would be involved on both sides if I make this request?
- Can I clearly explain what I am asking of someone else, and why I am making the request?
- Does this request support specific goals?

* If I have assembled all the facts necessary to support my request, and both the goal and request is clear; the intensity should be higher.
* If I am not able to explain what I am asking, and why, the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**

- Is the person making a request vague, or unclear of exactly what they are asking?
- Can they not give valid reasons for how this will benefit them or help them to accomplish something that will bring them closer to a clear goal?

* If the request is clearly defined, goal oriented, and backed up with supporting facts; the intensity should be lower.
* If the request is vague, and not clearly defined, or the person requesting can’t explain how this will actually help them; the intensity should be higher.

5) Authority

**Consider before making a request:**

- Is the person I am making the request of in a position of authority over me?
- Am I in a position to make a request of authority over the person I am making the request of?

* If I am in a position of authority over what I am requesting, or the person I am making the request of; the intensity should be higher.
* If I am asking something of a person in authority over me; the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**

* If I have authority over the other person; the intensity should be higher.
* If the person asking something of me is in authority (especially in connection with the request made); the intensity should be lower.
6) Rights

**Consider before making a request:**
- Am I requesting something that the other person is legally required to give me?
- Am I requesting something that is viewed to be my right to have by social moral codes?
- Am I requesting something that is in my workplace bylaws as my right to have?

* If I am requesting something that the other is required to give me; the intensity should be higher.
* If I am asking for something that the other person is under no obligation to agree to; the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**
- Is the request being made of me something that I am required to give the other?

* If someone is asking me to sacrifice something that is rightfully mine; the intensity should be highest.
* If someone is asking for something I am not obligated to give; the intensity should be higher.
* If someone asks me to do something or give them something that I am required to do; the intensity should be lower.

7) Relationship

**Consider before making a request:**
- Is what I am asking of someone appropriate to our current relationship?
- Am I asking for more than is reasonable for the status of our relationship?

* If what I am requesting is appropriate to the current status of our relationship; the intensity should be higher.
* If I am asking for something that is not appropriate or reasonable to the current status of our relationship; the intensity should be lower.

**Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:**
- Is the person making a request of me that is not appropriate to our current relationship?
- Are they asking for more than is reasonable for the status of our relationship?

* If what is being asked of me is not appropriate or reasonable to our current relationship; the intensity should be higher.
* If someone is asking me for something that is appropriate for our current relationship; the intensity should be lower.
8) Reciprocity

Consider before making a request:
- Am I making a request of a person that I have done at least that much for in the past?
- Am I willing to do a return favor of like value to the person I am making the request of?
* If I am making a request of a person I share a give and take relationship with, and have done as much for them as I am asking; the intensity should be higher.
* If I am asking for anything from a person I have done nothing for in the past, but promise to repay the favor; the intensity should be close to neutral.
* If I have refused to help the person that I am making a request to; the intensity should be lower.

Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:
- Has the person making the request shown a willingness to return favors shown?
- Have they helped me as much as they are asking for help?
- Is the person making the request someone I can depend on to help me in return when I need help?
* If the person requesting usually does not reciprocate, and is not owe a favor, the intensity should be higher.
* If the person requesting has helped me in an equal manner before, and I can depend on them to return the favor, the intensity should be lower.

9) Long versus short term

Consider before making a request:
* If being submissive will result in peace now, but create problems in the long run; the intensity of asking should be higher.

Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:
* If giving in and getting short-term peace now is not more important than the long-term welfare of the relationship; the intensity of saying no should be higher.
10) Respect

Consider before making a request:
- Have I asked for too much help too often?
- Have I lost the respect of the person I am making the request of by acting helpless when I could have handled things myself?
- Do I usually do things for myself?
- Do I attempt to do what I am asking for help with (to find out if I could or could not do it) before I ask for help?

* If I usually do things for myself and at least attempt to do it first; the intensity should be higher.
* If I frequently act helpless to get help when I likely could do it myself if I tried; the intensity should be lower.

Consider before responding ‘no’ to a request:
- Have I lost respect for the person making the request because the frequently act helpless when that is not the case?
- Does the person making the request frequently ask for help to get out of doing it?
- Will I feel bad about myself if I say ‘no’?
- Does Wise Mind say that I should say ‘no’?

* If saying no will not result in bad feelings about myself, and if wise mind says no; the intensity of saying no should be higher.

LOW INTENSITY: ACCEPT THE SITUATION AS IT IS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ask or Not Ask?</th>
<th>Answer ‘No’ or ‘Yes’?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Ask, Don’t Hint</td>
<td>Do What Is Requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hint Indirectly, Accept No</td>
<td>1  Express Hesitancy, Say Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hint Openly, Accept No</td>
<td>2  Express Unwillingness, Say Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Tentatively, Accept No</td>
<td>3  Express Unwillingness, Decide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Firmly, Accept No</td>
<td>4  Refuse Firmly, But Reconsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Firmly, Resist No</td>
<td>5  Refuse Firmly, Resist Giving In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Firmly, Insist</td>
<td>6  Refuse Firmly, Don’t Give In</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIGH INTENSITY: TRY TO CHANGE THE SITUATION

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ASK OR DON’T ASK?
WORKSHEET

1) What is the request that I am debating?
   ____________________________________________________________

2) Who is making this request?
   ____________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>CONSIDERATIONS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Can person give me what I want?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is this a good time to ask?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Am I prepared to be precise and clear?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Do I have authority over the person?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Do I have a right to what I’m asking?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Is my request appropriate to the relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>Am I asking less than I give?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Is asking important to long term goals?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Am I acting competent?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) SUM: _____ . ______

If there are more ‘YES’ than ‘NO’ answers, the request should be made.

* It is important to note here that this method is not concrete, (BLACK AND WHITE). Limits that are appropriate vary from person to person and even from situation to situation.

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REQUEST INTENSITY WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS GOALS</th>
<th>CONSIDERATIONS</th>
<th>INTENSITY VALUE 0-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Objectives</td>
<td>Handout Page 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Relationships</td>
<td>Handout Page 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Self-Respect</td>
<td>Handout Page 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) Which Effectiveness Goal is most important in this situation?
Objectives _____  Relationships _____  Self-Respect _____

* The Value of the most important Effectiveness Goal will be logged in the following chart

5) What Intensity Value did you give each of the following Factors? (Situation Intensity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>CONSIDERATIONS</th>
<th>INTENSITY VALUE 0-6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness Goals</td>
<td>First Table Chart</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Handout Page 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Handout Page 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Handout Page 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Handout Page 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Handout Page 8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Handout Page 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>Handout Page 9</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Goals</td>
<td>Handout Page 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Handout Page 10</td>
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SUM: _____________

Sum:  
0-10 = 0 (Don’t Ask, Don’t Hint)
11-20 = 1 (Hint Indirectly, Accept No)
21-30 = 2 (Hint Openly, Accept No)
31-40 = 3 (Ask Tentatively, Accept No)
41-50 = 4 (Ask Firmly, Accept No)
51-60 = 5 (Ask Firmly, Resist No)
61-70 = 6 (Ask Firmly, Insist)

*It is important to note here that this method is not concrete, (BLACK AND WHITE). Limits that are appropriate vary from person to person and even from situation to situation. Considering all factors and their intensity levels can only give you a ball park average to what is usually considered appropriate.

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ANSWER ‘NO’ OR ‘YES’?
WORKSHEET

1) What is the request that I am debating asking?

____________________________________________________________________________

2) Who would I be making the request of?

____________________________________________________________________________

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<td>Is request clear and specific?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Is person in authority over me?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Rights</td>
<td>Does saying no violate person’s rights?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Is request appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>Do I owe person?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Does no interfere w/long term goals?</td>
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<td>Does wise mind say yes?</td>
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If there are more ‘NO’ than ‘YES’ answers, the answer should be ‘NO’.

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