

Fairness in Communication

A Relational Fairness Guide.

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Office of the Student Ombuds



Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their input, feedback, and support in the creation of this handbook :

Office of the Student Ombuds

Natalie Sharpe

Marc Johnson

Brent Epperson

Josh Hillaby

Faculty Members

Dr. Clive Hickson

Dr. Brenda Leskiw

Dr. Paul Melançon

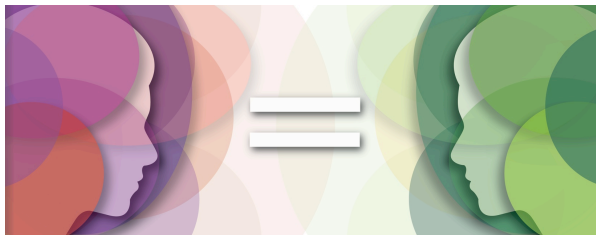
Dr. Frank Peters

Administrative Professionals

Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison

Deb Eerkes

I would especially like to thank my supervisor, Natalie Sharpe, and the Internship Program in Psychology Coordinator, Dr. Sandra Ziolkowski, for their patience and encouragement over the course of this project and throughout my internship.



Office of the Student Ombuds

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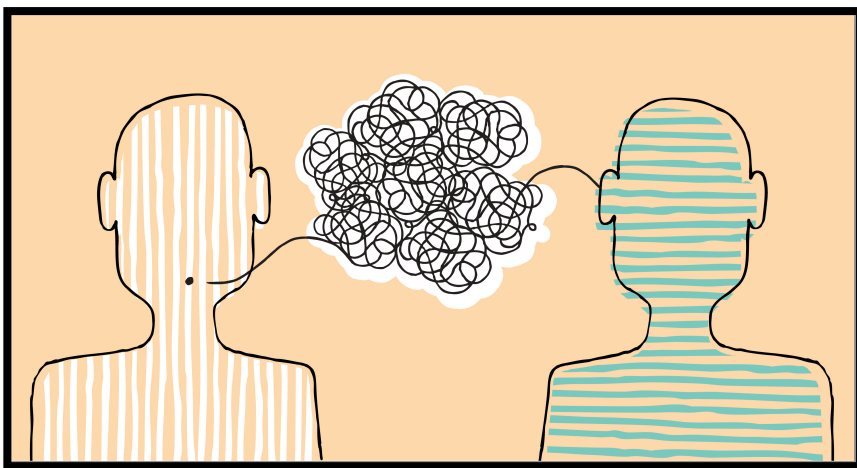
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INTRODUCTION

As a student in the Internship Program in Psychology (IPP) at the University of Alberta, I completed a 12-month work placement with the Office of the Student Ombuds. Over the last year, I have worked on this handbook as my final internship project.

During my placement with the Office of the Student Ombuds, I was able to experience first-hand the importance of effective communication. As an impartial Ombudsperson, I offered advice, information, and support to students and other members of the campus community in a wide range of University processes and conflict-related issues. Through the Ombuds lens, I developed an appreciation for fairness and a more open-minded approach in considering interpersonal conflict. Collections of procedural documents on university campuses always seem to tell us ‘WHAT to do if...’ but seem to leave out the *how*. Human interaction is imperfect, as it should be, yet we too easily think of communication as something we do, instead of as a *skill we practice*. Personal perceptions, backgrounds, and emotions play an undeniable role in social interaction, and must therefore be actively considered in interpersonal communication. I have put together this handbook as a tool to promote fairness in our interactions with others by illustrating its importance, acknowledging our responsibility, and encouraging self-awareness.

Dealing with conflict can be difficult, daunting, and emotionally-trying, but each of us has the potential to learn and practice skills to work through it more effectively. I hope that this handbook offers useful tips, or if nothing else, prompts you to consider a new perspective on the value of fairness in communication.

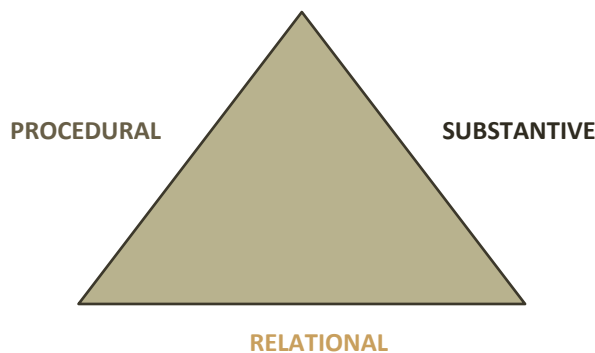


Source: <http://www.startupist.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/communication.jpg>

INTRODUCING THE FAIRNESS TRIANGLE

“That’s not fair” is commonly heard from exasperated young children when they don’t get what they want, or when they don’t get the same thing as someone else. We can all think of a time when we felt unfairly treated – maybe by a parent, a colleague, a peer, or a supervisor. This experience of unfair treatment may be associated with feelings of frustration, but it may also be layered with feelings of disappointment, of being misunderstood, of being dismissed or disrespected, or even of utter powerlessness. This *perception* of unfairness and the feelings associated with it are significantly influenced by the way we are treated in our interactions with others, in other words, by the quality of *relational fairness*.

In an institution structured around standardized procedures and step-wise processes, it is easy to forget about the importance of relational fairness in our interactions with fellow students, faculty members, and other University/Students’ Union staff. We may too quickly assume that procedural accuracy alone, guarantees fair treatment and outcomes. The Office of the Student Ombuds approaches fairness through the lens of the Fairness Triangle⁴ (adapted from the Ombudsman Saskatchewan What is Fairness? Triangle¹⁰). This approach considers three distinct, yet equally important, aspects of fairness in decision-making processes: Procedural, Substantive, and Relational.



Ombudsman Saskatchewan Fairness Triangle¹⁰

Procedural (*how* the decision was made¹⁰) and substantive (*what* decision was made¹⁰) aspects of fairness can be easier to keep track of and uphold simply because they can be objectively and concretely measured; they depend solely on external actions, as opposed to internalized perceptions. Procedural and substantive aspects of fairness could arguably be tracked with a check-list; were the correct steps followed in the appropriate order? Was the action or decision within an individual’s delegated range of authority?¹⁰ Conversely, **relational** aspects of fairness depends on both measurable behaviours *and* an individual’s perception, or interpretation of that behaviour (i.e. **how I was treated**¹⁰).

The purpose of this handbook is to focus on the importance of relational fairness in effective communication. Beginning with a consideration of fairness through an Ombuds lens, this handbook aims to offer practical fairness tips for you to consider and practice in your work and interactions with others.

FAIRNESS AND COFFEE:

CONSIDERING THE THREE ASPECTS OF FAIRNESS

You're trying out a new coffee shop. You walk in and check out the menu; they don't have your regular so you decide on something else. Thankfully, there is no line so you walk up to the counter to place your order. You then notice that all of the baristas are standing and chatting in the corner. You are the only customer in the coffee shop, yet they don't seem to notice you waiting there. With a polite, yet mildly irritated "excuse me," you manage to get the attention of one of the baristas. The barista comes over to the counter to take your order, and begins punching things in



Source: <http://www.nicklatoof.com/wp-content/gallery/coffee-crutch-photos-1/Saucer-Coffee-Cup.jpg>

on the till while carrying on the conversation with their coworkers. Without uttering a word, the barista then puts out a hand for your payment. Suppressing a huff of disbelief, you proceed to pay for your order and then step to the side to wait for your coffee. After a few minutes of waiting, you notice that the barista has placed your coffee on the far counter, without saying anything to let you know it was ready. You hurriedly pick up your coffee and head out of the café. Your coffee is nice and hot, exactly what you ordered, and you only waited a few minutes for it, but it's probably safe to say that you won't become a frequent regular at this particular coffee shop!

Now, let's consider the three aspects of fairness in the above scenario using the Ombuds Fairness Triangle¹⁰:

The **procedural** aspect of fairness concerns procedural requirements in filling your order; was your coffee made properly? Were the correct steps followed in terms of processing your order and payment? Was your order filled in a timely manner?

The **substantive** aspect of fairness concerns the filling of the order itself; did an employed barista of the coffee shop make your drink? Was the end product something actually listed on the menu? Was the type of coffee you received, the type of coffee you ordered?

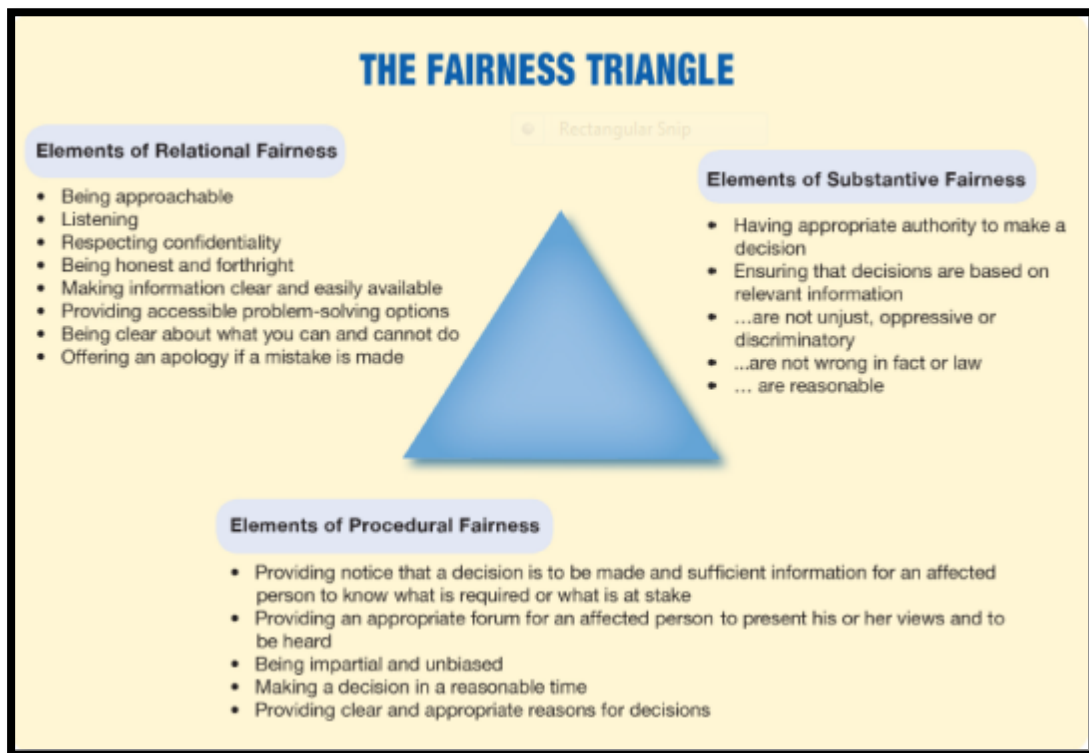
The **relational** aspect of fairness concerns the customer service; how were you treated? Were you listened to, respected, and made to feel like a valued customer?

The point of this example is to illustrate the impact of neglecting to consider relational fairness in our interactions with others. As a customer you definitely got what you wanted and the proper process was followed to make your coffee, but that missing relational fairness piece had a significant impact on the quality of your experience – probably enough to convince you to try a different coffee shop. How we are treated by others, and the feelings that come up as a result of that treatment carry a weight we cannot ignore.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

FAIRNESS WITHIN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Just as fairness in customer service affects the reputation of a business, fairness in a post-secondary institution affects its reputation as well. At colleges and universities, fairness is key to preserving the institution's academic reputation by upholding the integrity of publications, pursued research, and issued degrees. We must not forget, however, that this reputation is multifaceted and therefore also depends on the *experience* of students, faculty members, and staff in the university community. All three aspects of fairness are equally important in shaping this institutional reputation, but the relational aspect of fairness contributes more significantly to the fairness perceived through interpersonal interactions and personal experience. The following fairness triangle breaks down elements of each aspect of fairness in the context of a postsecondary institutions:



© Ombuds office at the University of Victoria⁴, adapted from the Ombuds Saskatchewan fairness triangle¹⁰

Most issues that arise at the University present some form of conflict. We see this conflict in missed deadlines, exam deferral requests, disciplinary decisions, grade appeals, class disruptions – the list goes on. According to B. Mayer's Wheel of Conflict in J. Macfarlane's work, conflict stems from five sources: "the ways people communicate, emotions, values, the structure within which interactions take place, and history" (p. 17-18)⁸. In order to promote relational fairness within the University, we must effectively work through conflict by managing our assumptions and personal biases, and by practicing effective communication skills.

FACT OR FICTION: THE PROBLEM WITH MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are part of our everyday life. We assume that our car will start when we need to go somewhere; we assume that a lecture, meeting, or appointment will start at its scheduled time. We make these assumptions for a variety of reasons, under a wide range of circumstances, but ultimately we make them for the sake of *efficiency*. When we assume something, we don't have to spend any extra time or energy asking, checking, or dwelling on it. It *makes sense* to make assumptions, but we need to be careful about when and how we make them. Social interaction presents a host of unique circumstances depending on the person and the context; because of this complexity, making assumptions can become problematic, especially when those assumptions are made in potential areas of conflict.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR¹¹.

When we witness someone else's actions, we make assumptions about what they are trying to accomplish and why. In a sense, we tell ourselves a story about other people's behaviour in order to process and make sense of it¹¹. The story we tell ourselves is often shaped by our personal beliefs, values, and experiences. According to the book *Crucial Confrontations* by Kerry Patterson et al. (2005), the way we process other people's behaviour can be described by the following flowchart¹¹:



The story, or explanation takes the form of an attribution; we decide on something to which we attribute a person's behaviour. The *error* that we make is attributing the behaviour to a person's internal qualities (who they are), without considering external factors (environmental motivators)¹. We then experience an emotional reaction to this attribution, which in turn influences *how we respond* to the other person's behaviour. If we tell ourselves a negative story, it will likely produce a strong negative emotion, which affects our ability to constructively work through the given conflict. A prime example of this is road rage: when we encounter a *questionable* driver on the road who is somehow completely unaware of the speed limit, on top of forgetting to use their signal light it's easy for the observer to become agitated. This agitation is likely the result of the common story we tell ourselves: that the driver is an incompetent idiot with zero regard for the safety of others. In this example, the *error* is neglecting to consider the possibility that the person might be in hurry due to an emergency, or that the signal light is burnt out without their knowledge. Focusing on external or contextual factors instead of internal qualities helps us manage our emotions, allowing us to react and communicate more effectively. In the above flowchart, the storytelling piece is critical in determining our responses to the world around us. Being mindful of the stories we tell ourselves in order to manage our assumptions requires us to also be aware of personal biases.

CONSIDERING CULTURE

“Culture affects conflict because it is embedded in individuals’ communication styles, history, way of dealing with emotions, values, and structures.” – B. Mayer⁸

Our university campus is incredibly culturally diverse. As much as this diversity enriches the University community, it also poses greater risks for miscommunication and misunderstanding. Our individual perceptions of behaviour are determined by two components: the behaviour itself, and the context of that behaviour⁵. Connecting this back to the *Crucial Confrontations* model, our perception of the action itself is what we *See and Hear*, while the contextual details are what we fill in as part of the story we tell ourselves. If we don’t get enough information in the *See and Hear* stage, we are forced to fill in the gaps ourselves during the storytelling stage. Our own cultural background and personal values shape our perceptions and explanations of other people’s behaviour; in order to communicate effectively, it is essential to be mindful of our own cultural and personal assumptions, **as well as** those of others¹¹.

Mindfulness could be thought of as an active self-awareness – a conscious consideration of the interplay between our thoughts and actions with those of others in the world around us. The following technique from Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel’s *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*¹² can be used to strive for productive intercultural communication:



Source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/5f/ea/2d/5fea2dd0bae2d8cdfa830a3d4b66573f.jpg>

“To be mindful of intercultural differences, we have to learn to see the unfamiliar behaviour from a nonjudgmental perspective.” – S. Ting-Toomey¹²

1. MINDFUL OBSERVATION using *O-D-I-S* analysis

Observe – be attentive to both verbal and non-verbal elements of communication.

Describe – make a mental list of observable behaviours (what you see, hear, etc.) It is easy to jump straight to our interpretation of the behaviour – by saying that someone was acting disrespectfully, aggressively, or suspiciously. What *observable* behaviours led you to that interpretation? How might your actions have prompted those behaviours? What cultural differences might be playing a role?

Interpret – come up with multiple possible interpretations/storylines to explain the behaviour. Limiting ourselves to our initial interpretation increases the chance of being ethnocentric. Being open-minded to a wider range of interpretations allows for a more balanced perspective and appropriate response.

Suspend Evaluation – evaluating our interpretations of a behaviour often includes an emotional reaction (the *Feel* stage of the *Crucial Confrontations* model) ; when considering this reaction, we need to be considerate of emotions shaped by our cultural biases. With this awareness, we can choose to either acknowledge and respect the different behaviour (i.e. suspend our evaluation of it), or acknowledge it, but still decide that we don’t *like* it because it makes us feel uncomfortable, frustrated, etc. (open-minded evaluation).

MINDFULNESS AND CULTURE

“Mindfulness means attending to one’s internal assumptions, cognitions, and emotions and, at the same time, becoming attuned to the other’s conflict assumptions, cognitions, and emotions.” – S. Ting-Toomey¹¹

When we are not aware of our own subjective influence in our observations, our resulting interpretations weaken with overwhelming personal bias. By being mindful of this bias in our interpretations, and by making a conscious effort to consider other perspectives, we put ourselves in a better position to have more productive, collaborative and relationally fair conversations. According to Ting-Toomey & Oetzel (2001)¹², learning to practice the following skills can help us to act mindfully:

- i. Considering any behaviours and information in the conflict situation as new, so as to remain open-minded and avoid jumping to subjective interpretations¹².
- ii. Considering the issue from multiple perspectives so as to develop a holistic view of the conflict situation¹².
- iii. Considering the context of the conflict and the influence of the other person’s situation on that conflict¹².

MINDFUL LISTENING¹² – “Listening without judgment, criticism or interruption, while being aware of internal thoughts and reactions that may get in the way of people communicating with you effectively.”⁹

i. **PARAPHRASING SKILL¹²** involves “(a) verbally summarizing the content meaning of the speaker’s message in your own words and (b) nonverbally echoing your interpretation of the emotional meaning of the speaker’s message” (p.181)¹². It is important to allow for either affirmation or clarification by the other person.

→ e.g. If someone is stressed or overwhelmed, they might tell you a really long story before they finally get to their point. Perhaps a student is looking for tutoring help, but starts out by explaining the events of the last month that led to doing poorly on a midterm. Paraphrasing would look something like “So it sounds like you’ve had a lot on your plate for the last month and you feel like you’ve had some trouble managing all of it, and today you’re looking for some tutoring help?”

ii. **PERCEPTION CHECKS¹²** are typically posed as clarifying questions to check whether our understanding of the verbal and nonverbal meanings are correct.

→ e.g. If someone says “I did it because I had no other choice,” paraphrasing would look something like “So I’m hearing that you felt overwhelmed and pressured in your situation, and that is why you did this?”

PRACTICING EMPATHY¹² – Putting yourself in the other person’s shoes in order to effectively consider the similarities and differences between the other person’s personal and cultural perspectives and your own. This can be especially important when there are differing levels of power or authority; empathy moves past the power differential to a level playing field where we now consider someone else’s experience as different but equally human.

CONSIDERING EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE

“Emotions are the energy that fuel conflict.” – B. Mayer⁸

Going in to a conversation about a particularly sensitive or difficult topic predisposes that conversation to heightened levels of emotion. In a university context, these difficult conversations can arise out of potential areas of power conflict. For example, when a student disagrees with the grade assigned by a professor, the student may start a grade appeal process. This process requires a great deal of effective interpersonal communication even as it proceeds to more formal levels at the University. Similarly, when an instructor suspects a student of academic misconduct, the instructor follows a specific process; this requires a critical conversation with the student that significantly influences the tone of the overall process. Either of these situations can be emotionally charged because of the personally vested interests. Having these emotional reactions is normal, but they become maladaptive when they prevent productive dialogue and reasonable responses. Here are some ways to keep maladaptive emotions in check and facilitate more relationally fair conversations:

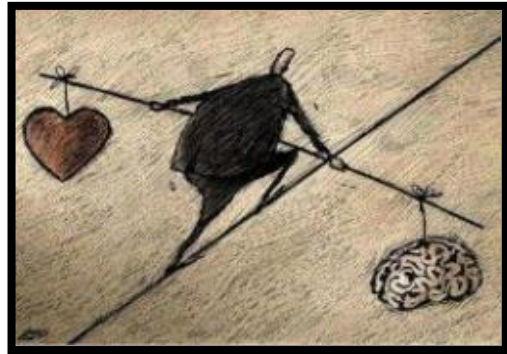
1. Reacting vs. Responding – The act of communicating is easy; however, communicating effectively requires skill. We rarely actually plan out what we’re going to say to someone because of how easy it is to contact the person; a quick phone call, text message, or email can start a conversation in seconds. When emotions are running high, the chances of that conversation being well thought-out and productive are quite low. When we are driven to action by emotion alone, we are only capable of reacting. Effective responses require thoughtful consideration. How might the conversation unfold? What do we want to achieve? How can we work towards that goal constructively?

2. Practice Emotional Awareness – Emotional reactions are a completely normal part of being human. In conflict situations, it is common to experience feelings of frustration, hurt, anger, resentment, fear, etc. which simply act to signal an unresolved issue⁶. The emotional reactions that come up in conflict can be difficult to control, however the ensuing behavioural response is something that we *do* have control over⁶. Being aware of our emotions offers insight and meaning to our actions. Before entering into a difficult conversation, ask yourself what the strongest feeling is; what is driving you forward? How might that affect your response? Is that response helping or hindering you, and others involved?

3. Tell yourself a different story⁶ – According to the *Crucial Confrontations* model, we all have emotional reactions to the story we tell ourselves¹¹ – our subjective interpretation of the world around us. In order to act constructively through effective communication, we want to avoid unhelpful emotions⁶. Regulating these emotions can be done at the storytelling level. Since the story can never fully be ‘truth’, as it is based on our subjective perceptions, we can practice telling ourselves stories that enable effective communication. One technique that can be used is engaging in creating a wide range of reasons, even the most absurd reason/story for someone else’s behaviour, as well as the most pleasantly reasonable story for someone else’s behaviour. If anything, this could simply be helpful to consider an alternative storyline to the one you originally came up with, which is tied to your values and beliefs about the world around you. It is important to consider *how* the story you are telling is influencing your emotions, and whether those emotions help or hinder your ability to have a productive, relationally fair conversation.

4. Be mindful of tone – Emotion has an uncanny ability to sneak into the tone of our voice. When we're angry, fearful, anxious, or defensive, it can be heard in the tonal quality. Overtly loud, aggressive, or hurried speech can be damaging to conversational rapport. We want to speak to others in a way that demonstrates openness, respect, and a willingness to listen.

5. Be aware of body language – Body language serves as a form of unspoken communication; without words, there is more room for subjective interpretation. The impact of body language on interpersonal communication is significant; sometimes all it takes is a look to tell us that we've disappointed, angered, or hurt someone. Since our facial reactions and body position typically happen without much conscious thought, they can fuel conflicts without much effort. Being more aware of body language is something that comes with practice; it is helpful to be aware of these emotional body



Source: <http://www.livebreathediscover.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Heart-brain-balance.jpg>

reactions when working through conflict. We all have habitual body reactions that occur when we're upset or uncomfortable; perhaps you cross your arms or look away; perhaps you get physically closer to the person with whom you are experiencing conflict; perhaps you sigh, or turn your body away from the person you are speaking with. It is important to consider our own habits and body language in order to change them into something that facilitates open and respectful communication. In many Euro-Western cultures, making eye contact with the person you are speaking with, keeping your body language open (i.e. not crossing your arms across your chest or turning your body away from the person with whom you are having a conversation), and being sensitive to the personal space of others are three of many ways to show attentiveness, respect and a willingness to collaborate. These particular examples of body language, however, may not reflect the same messages in other cultures – a difference that is important to keep in mind when interpreting the behaviour of other people.

6. It's not personal until you make it personal² – We can be quick to assume that, when someone says or does something that we don't agree with or that has a negative impact on us, the person does it *on purpose to hurt us*. For example, when a student receives an unfavourable grade, the student may think that the professor does not like the student and therefore wants to assign them a failing grade. Similarly, when a student attempts to cheat during an exam, the professor thinks that the student does not respect the professor. With this line of storytelling, it is not surprising that the emotional reactions are strongly negative – frustration, anger, resentment – will lead to adversarial stances and poor communication. Further, these stories are fuelled by negative, selective perceptions instead of objective, external standards. Perhaps the grade is lower than expected because certain requirements weren't met in a final project. Perhaps the student cheated out of fear of parental pressures and failure to meet family expectations. By taking a step back from our immediate personal reactions, we can enter into a conversation more introspectively and self-reflectively. This allows us to use a more constructive approach, and provides us with the opportunity to become more informed through respectful dialogue. Even if it *was* personal, we deprive ourselves of the chance for relationally fair and helpful communication by immediately jumping to this conclusion.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

1. JUST ASK. When we don't ask, we resort to false or misleading assumptions. Sometimes asking can be difficult or take more time, but ultimately it provides us with more accurate information on which to act. Asking a question typically takes less time than correcting a mistake and potentially offending another. For example, if you're not sure about your assignment requirements, it's much easier to ask a friend or assume that you probably know what you're doing, but checking with a professor will give you the right answer from a reliable source of information.

→ Unless you have already been told or given the information, you can't be certain unless you ask.

→ Asking can build rapport by helping someone to feel heard and respected. Assuming can send the message that you don't see value in the other person's input; this can be damaging when trying to work towards solving an issue.

→ It is important to be mindful of *how* you ask your questions. Questions rooted in assumptions and ridden with condescension can be offensive and damaging to relational fairness.

Ask questions non-judgmentally in a way that is genuine and allows for a range of answers.

2. PLAN AND PREPARE. People often jump straight into conversations, driven by emotions and knee-jerk reactions. This can be particularly dangerous in conflict situations. It is easy to forget how valuable it can be to plan out an important conversation. Too often we send an email, start a phone call, or approach someone driven by something along the lines of *'I have a problem and I don't like it'* without a well-thought out response. For example, if you disagree with your grade, instead of sending your professor a quick email demanding an explanation for the assigned grade, take a step back and think about the best way to have the conversation with them

→ What is your biggest concern? What relevant information needs to be discussed? What are you hoping to achieve? What are some potential outcomes? What will you do in response to those outcomes? How will you know when to move on?

* Setting a mindful conversation plan provides direction and allows for more productive communication.

3. VALIDATE FEELINGS³. Empathizing with someone does not mean agreeing with the person or the person's actions. When dealing with a difficult situation, it is important to remember that empathizing with someone's stress, fear, discomfort, or anger is not the same thing as accepting the person's behaviours which may be damaging and/or obstructive. All human beings have felt scared, nervous, frustrated; we often look to others for support during times of struggle. Validating feelings – and not behaviours – is a way to provide the necessary support without acquiescing someone's actions.

4. CONSIDER THE OTHER SIDE. Limited by our own intentions and motivations, we often forget to consider how other people might respond to us when we approach an issue. Taking the time to consider how the other party might view the situation or shared problem can help us come up with more effective ways to approach it. In conflict, it can be tempting to see things in black and white – *I'm right and you're wrong*, but this is seldom the case. Try to think of ways that *your* perspective might be wrong, and that the *other* person's perspective might be right. If you have decided on a way to approach the issue, consider how the other person might respond to that approach.

CONCLUSION

Fairness can be approached from three different, equally important angles. Of the three, procedural and substantive fairness are more overtly measurable, while relational fairness also depends on subjective perception. In areas of potential conflict, relational fairness is more vulnerable to emotional influence and personal bias. It is therefore important to be mindful of these emotions and our assumptions in our interactions with others. Effective communication starts with increased self-awareness – understanding how our beliefs, experiences, and values shape our perceptions of the world around us. Next, we must consider how those perceptions influence the way we interact with, and respond to others. Taking a step back, acknowledging our personal backgrounds and how they shape our perspective, and thinking through those difficult conversations before we go into them will ultimately facilitate more constructive, collaborative, and relationally fair conversations.



Source: <http://media02.hongkiat.com/effective-communications-designers/communication-pattern.jpg>

END NOTES

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Additional Resources Used

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EXTRA READINGS & RESOURCES

(1) University of Alberta – Student Conduct and Accountability

Resources for Students: <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Students.aspx>

Resources for Instructors and TAs: <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Instructors.aspx>

Community Resources: <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/Community.aspx>

(2) Brock University Ombuds Resources

Communicating Effectively During Conflict

<http://www.mediate.com/articles/eisaguirreL3.cfm?nl=155>

We Have to Talk: A Step-By-Step Checklist for Difficult Conversations

<http://www.mediate.com/articles/ringerJ1.cfm>

Active Listening: Hear What People are Really Saying

<https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>

Resources for Supervisors and Graduate Students:

<http://alh.sagepub.com/content/12/2/101.full.pdf+html>

<http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/1998/04/dysfunctional-advisee-adviser-relationships-methods-negotiating-beyond-conflict>

How To Handle Difficult Behaviour In The Workplace

<http://www.mediate.com/articles/belak4.cfm>

(3) Ryerson University Ombuds Resources

Administrative Fairness Checklist

<http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/ombuds/documents/Administrative%20Fairness%20checklist.pdf>

(4) University of Toronto Ombuds Resources

Troubleshooting Tips

<http://ombudsperson.utoronto.ca/reports/troubleshooting.pdf>

Seven Guidelines for Handling Conflicts Constructively

<http://ombudsperson.utoronto.ca/reports/conflict.pdf>

(5) University of Victoria Ombuds Resources

Fairness (for students, staff, faculty)

<http://uvicombudsperson.ca/guides/fairness/>

Tips for Resolving Problems

<http://uvicombudsperson.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/OmbudsBrochureResolvingProblems2.pdf>

(6) ACCUO Fairness Guide

Fairness is Everyone's Concern: A Sampling of Practices and Resources on Cultivating Fairness - http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/accuo_aoucc/english/FairnessGuide2015.pdf