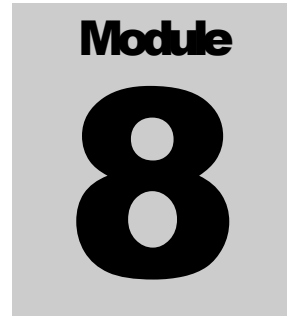


**MESSENGERS
OF PEACE**
A C A D E M Y



OPERATION SALAM
DA'WAH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Module Eight: Communication Skills

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Module 8

In this module

- Learn about effective communications skills
- Learn about body language and da'wah
- Learn the key points to consider when giving a da'wah presentation

Unit One: Effective Communication Skills

1. Give them the impression that you're enthusiastic about talking to them. They want to feel that you would rather be talking to them than anyone else. When you give them the impression that you are excited about talking to them and that you care about them, you make them feel better about themselves. As a result, they'll be more likely to really open up to you.

2. Ask open-ended questions about their interests. Ask questions that will get them to talk about their interests and their life in a way that provides you with insight into their needs and wants. When you help them gain a new, positive perspective about their situation, they will feel a deep sense of connection with you.

3. Adapt to their body language and feelings. Pay special attention to their nonverbal communication. Watch their body language and posture, also take note of their inflection and word choices. Now, tailor your words, body language, and voice tone to match what you have observed. Doing this will help them feel a deep subconscious connection with you.

4. Show them approval: Tell them what you admire about them and why. One of the best ways to instantly connect with people is to be forthright and tell them exactly why you like or admire them. If being too direct isn't appropriate, insinuate with a few indirect statements here and there. Either approach can be equally as effective because everyone responds well to approval.

5. Listen attentively to everything they say. Don't focus too much on what you're going to say next as they are talking. Instead, listen to every word they say and respond back as relevantly and smoothly as possible. This shows people that you are interested in what they have to say and you are fully engaged and in the moment with them. Also make sure to ask questions whenever there's something they say that you don't quite understand. This will help fill any potentially awkward lapses in communication.

6. Give them the right amount of eye contact. Eye contact communicates to the other person that you are not only interested in them and what they have to say, but that you are also trustworthy. When done in moderation, they will also assume you are confident in yourself because of your willingness to face them directly. As a result, people will naturally want to pay more attention to you and what you have to say.

7. Reveal as much about yourself as possible. One of the best ways to earn someone's trust is to reveal yourself as openly as you can. Tell stories about interesting events from your life or just describe instances from normal everyday life. As you do this, make sure not to mention things that stray too far from where their interests and values lie. Nothing builds trust like genuine transparency.

8. Give the impression that you are on the same team. Use words like "we, us, we're, our, and ourselves" to instantly build a bond. When you use those words, you make it seem like you are all on the same team with a common goal or concern. This moves you into their circle while everyone else seems lack your special insight and understanding.

9. Give them your best smile. When you smile at people, you communicate that you like them and their presence brings you happiness. Smiling at them will cause them to subconsciously want to smile back at you which will instantly build rapport between the two of you. Just make sure that your smile is sincere because if it's not they will sense it.

10. Offer helpful suggestions. Recommend restaurants you've been to, places you've been to, helpful people they'd like to meet, books you've read, career opportunities and whatever else you can think of. Describe what was so great about those people, places and things and how they might appeal to the other person. If you suggest enough ideas that interest them, they will look at you as a "go to" person when they need to make a decision about what to do next.

11. Give them encouragement. If the person you're dealing with is younger or in a more difficult position than you, they will appreciate any encouragement you can offer. When you help them feel more confident in their own abilities they will value your input. This helps even out the relationship. Convince them that they can surpass their problems and limitations and they will feel good about connecting with you.

12. Appear to have a slightly higher energy level than the other person. Generally, people want to be around those who lift them up, instead of bringing them down. If you indicate with your voice and your body language that you have a slightly higher energy level, they will feel more energized and positive while around you. Don't be so energetic that you put people off, but have enough so that they feel energized after talking with you.

13. Say their name in a way that is pleasing to their ears. A person's name is one of the most emotionally powerful words for them. But how you say it is more important than how often say it. If you say their name with the right inflection, it can actually convey a lot of positive feeling directly to their nervous system. If their

name feels good to them when you say it, they will feel bonded to you on a subconscious level without even knowing why.

14. Offer to take the relationship a step further. There are a number of things you could do to advance your friendship with someone: offer to eat with them, talk over a cup of coffee, see a sports game, etc. Even if people don't take you up on your offers, they will be flattered.

Unit Two: Body Language and Da'wah

There is no specific advice on how to use your body language. What you do might be interpreted in several ways, depending on the setting and who you are talking to. You'll probably want to use your body language differently when talking to a man compared to when you talk to a woman. These are some common interpretations of body language and often more effective ways to communicate with your body.

First, to change your body language you must be aware of your body language. Notice how you sit, how you stand, how you use your hands and legs, what you do while talking to someone.

1. Don't cross your arms or legs – You have probably already heard you shouldn't cross your arms as it might make you seem defensive or guarded. This goes for your legs too. Keep your arms and legs open.

2. Have eye contact, but don't stare – If there are several people you are talking to, give them all some eye contact to create a better connection and see if they are listening. Keeping too much eye-contact might creep people out. Giving no eye-contact might make you seem insecure.

3. Relax your shoulders – When you feel tense it's easily winds up as tension in your shoulders. They might move up and forward a bit. Try to relax. Try to loosen up by shaking the shoulders a bit and move them back slightly.

4. Nod when they are talking – nod once in a while to signal that you are listening. But don't overdo it.

5. Don't slouch, sit up straight – but in a relaxed way, not in a too tense manner.

6. Smile –Relax a bit, and smile. People will be a lot more inclined to listen to you if you seem to be a positive person. Smile when you are introduced to someone but don't keep a smile plastered on your face, you'll seem insincere.

7. Don't touch your face – it might make you seem nervous and can be distracting for the listeners or the people in the conversation.

8. Keep your head up – Don't keep your eyes on the ground, it might make you seem insecure and a bit lost. Keep your head up straight and your eyes towards the horizon.

9. Slow down a bit – this goes for many things. Walking slower not only makes you seem more calm and confident, it will also make you feel less stressed. If someone addresses you, don't snap your neck in their direction, turn it a bit more slowly instead.

10. Use your hands more confidently instead of fidgeting with your hands and scratching your face use them to communicate what you are trying to say. Use your hands to describe something or to add weight to a point you are trying to make. But don't use them too much or it might become distracting.

11. Don't stand too close – Let people have their personal space, don't invade it.

12. Mirror – Often when you get along with a person, when the two of you get a good connection, you will start to mirror each other unconsciously. That means that you mirror the other person's body language a bit. To make the connection better you can try a bit of proactive mirroring. If he leans forward, you might lean forward. But don't react instantly and don't mirror every change in body language.

13. Keep a good attitude – last but not least, keep a positive, open and relaxed attitude. How you feel will come through in your body language and can make a major difference.

You can change your body language but as all new habits it takes a while. Especially things like keeping your head up might take time to correct if you have spent thousands of days looking at your feet. And if you try and change too many things at once it might become confusing and feel overwhelming.

Unit Three: Public Presentations

Propagating the Message through oration is a very effective and common method of Da'wah. Words that are heard are more inspiring and moving than words that are read, as they contain prominent features of life and emotion. When the caller is assigned with a public presentation (e.g. sermon, talk, etc.) there are rational and religious guidelines he/she should follow. Some of these are summarised below:

1. Choice of subject

The choice of subject must be relevant and interesting, well researched and prepared, systematically developed and integrated, and logically approached by building up the main themes and ideas leading to a final conclusion.

2. Method of delivery

The caller should be in connection with all levels of the community and not favour a group of people over others. He should also address his lectures with wisdom on different occasions, depending on the people's scope of intellect. However an outstanding feature of an exemplary lecture is when the speaker addresses the thoughts, feelings and souls of the audience. The expectations of the listeners' thoughts are met when logical proofs presented to them. The feelings and emotions are moved when they hear the truth that calls for good and rejects evil; and their souls will be delighted when they hear the desire of Allah's great reward and the despise of His punishment.

3. Good preparation

If the caller is well prepared and has trust in Allah, his confidence will be at a high esteem.

Allah says:

"And who is better in speech than he who says: 'My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness),' and then stands straight (acts upon His Order), and invites (men) to Allah, and does righteous deeds, and says: 'I am one of the Muslims.'" [Qur'an, 41:33]

4. Parables & similitudes

The use of parables will make the comprehension of an issue and its memorisation much easier and more interesting. Allah Himself makes use of such language:

"And indeed We have put forth for men, in this Qur'an every kind of similitude in order that they may remember." [Qur'an, 39:27]

5. Choice of time

'Abdullah b. Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to take care of us in preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we might not get bored." [Bukhari].

It should be remembered that each group will have its concentration span. Young children are limited to twenty minutes, adults who come to pray Juma'a and have work will also become fidgety if the sermon gets too long.

6. Brevity & eloquence

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: *"The lengthening of prayer by a man and the shortness of the sermon is a sign of his understanding (of faith). So lengthen the prayer and shorten the sermon, for there is charm (in precise) expression."* [Muslim]

Unfortunately however there are many who will out of good-will give a prolonged Khutbah, citing that this is the only opportunity that many will receive some knowledge. The converse is true in this situation, as the people become restless and tune-out.

7. Clarity & repetition

Narrated 'Aaishah (رضي الله عنها): *"The Prophet (ﷺ) used to talk so clearly that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so."* [Bukhari].

It has also been narrated from Anas b. Malik (رضي الله عنه): *"Whenever the Prophet spoke a sentence (said a thing), he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him."* [Bukhari]

8. Gestures

Abu Uthman (رضي الله عنه) narrated that while we were at Azerbaijan, 'Umar wrote to us: 'Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade wearing silk except this much. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) approximated his two (index and middle) fingers (to illustrate that) to us.' [Bukhari]

This hadith illustrates the importance of the cleaver and intentional use of body language. The positioning of the body, stance of the feet, hand gestures and eye contact will all affect the public's reaction towards the speech.

9. Visual aids

Visual aids have become more widespread and accepted as a form of communication with the onset of technology. Overhead projectors, chalk or white boards, and charts are very effective ways to reinforce specific points. The Prophet (ﷺ) used visual aids to bring across important facts as 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) drew a line and then said: **'That is the path shown by Allah.'** Then he drew several other lines on his right and left sides and said: **'These are the paths on every side of which there is a devil calling towards it.'** He then recited this verse: **'And verily, this (i.e. Allah's Commandments) is my Straight Path, so follow it'** [Qur'an, 6:153]" [Tirmidhi]

10. Questions

Answering questions is one of the best forms of teaching as it satisfies the needs of the questioner. There are many verses in the Qur'an which were revealed to answer a posed question; to explain a law that was called for by an event, to respond to a raised objection, or to comment on a past incident.

Posing questions will stimulate thought and the sharing of ideas. Answers which are rewarded will often encourage eager participation.



Questions for critical reflection

1. The art of listening is an integral part of any successful communication process. Remember, not everything heard needs to be commented upon.
2. In order for people to genuinely “know” one another they need to start contact with each other on a positive note without pre-conceived hostilities. We need to resist the tendency to make collective, hasty judgments of others based on generalized negative ideas.
3. Your body language speaks volumes about you before you open your mouth. By developing your awareness of the signs and signals of body language, you can more easily understand other people, and more effectively communicate with them.

Summary

- ✓ Da’wah requires the caller being able to effectively communicate the message.
- ✓ Certain body language can give a negative impact to your Da’wah.
- ✓ Public speaking is a skill. Following adopting some of the presentation skills, your da’wah can become much more effective.