

Communication Builders

Whether you are backing up a graintruck or discussing your financial situation with your banker, it is important to effectively communicate your needs to others. The following are some ideas that can help enhance your communication with family, friends and in business.

- Set aside an **appropriate time and place** to communicate (especially for the more difficult discussions.)
- Discuss **one issue at a time**.
- Communicate **realistic expectations clearly**. Use “**I statements**” more often than “you statements”. For example: “I get worried and angry when I hear that you think we should buy a new bale processor. What I’d like to see us do is sit down and decide together which major purchases we can afford and what we can do without.”
- Give **clear messages!**
- Give one another your **full attention**. Active listening is not a passive process. A good listener is listening for both facts and feelings in the message.
- **Repeat back** in your own words what you think the person is attempting to communicate. It shows that you are listening and gives the communicator a chance to clarify any information that may have been misunderstood.
- Give yourselves permission to **take a break** from a difficult issue. Stop, take a break, and either try something different or leave the issue for now, especially if things are getting too heated.
- Remember that like any skill, **it takes practice** to develop effective communication skills.