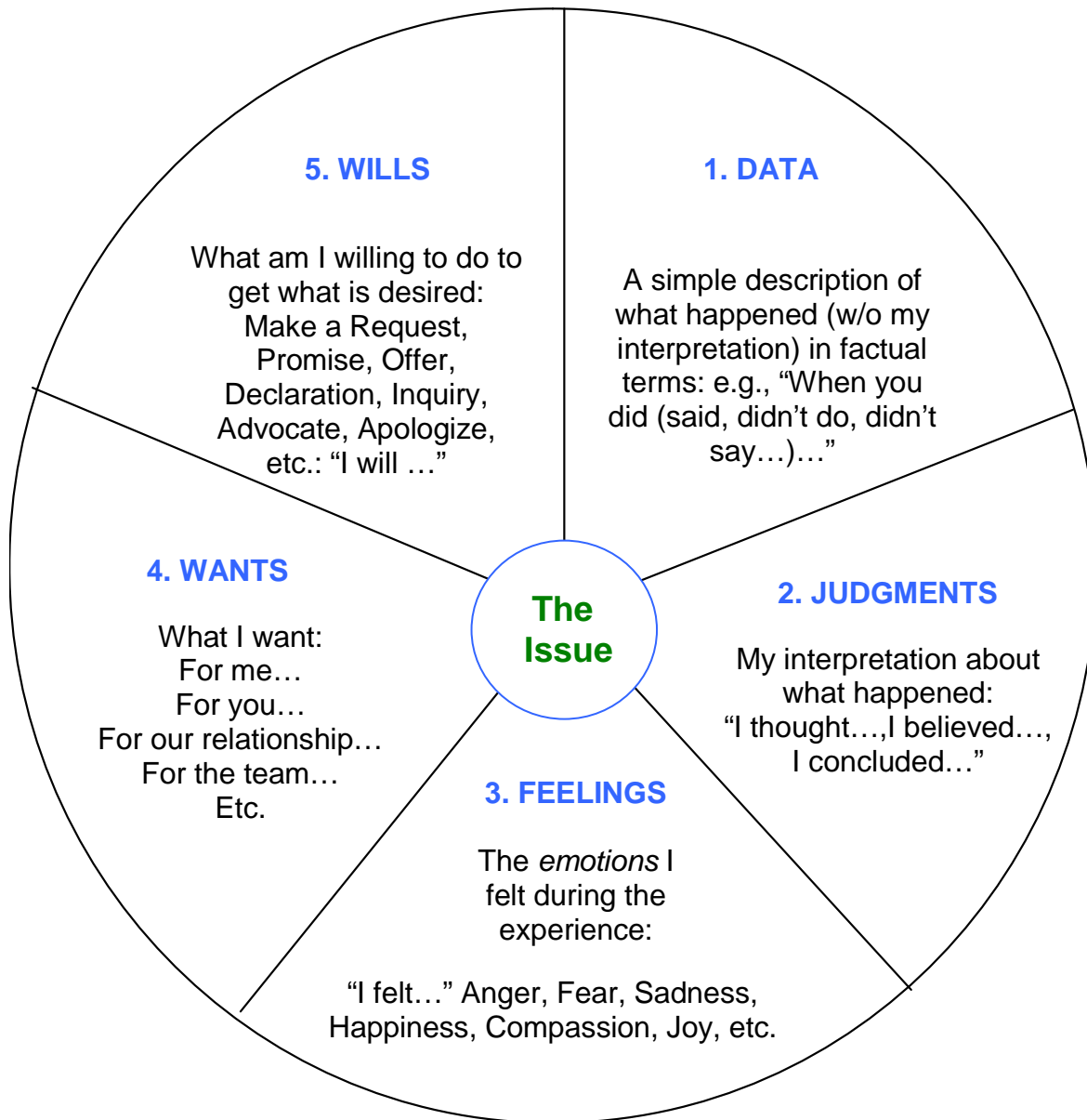


Complete Communication Wheel



Complete Communication is helpful in any situation where conflict or misunderstanding has arisen. This is a non-defensive way for letting the other person know how you have reacted to his or her behavior. It is a way of claiming how you are or have reacted to an experience, rather than being an accusation. **Start with the data**, what you perceived the other person saying or doing. Make sure the other person accepts your description of the data before moving on. The Data, when **interpreted** by you, produces **Judgments** and **Feelings**. Speak these directly, declaring them as your own interpretations. Then let the other person know what you **want** for you, for them, and for the relationship. Finally, let the other person know what you are **willing** to do to resolve the situation, strengthen the relationship, and get better outcomes.

Adapted from Alan Gilburg, Growth Dynamics, Inc.

Two Communication Approaches: Complete Communication Wheel & The Speech Acts

Complete Communication Wheel*	The Speech Acts**
Data: the facts about what happened: e.g., “when you said / when you did...”	Assertions: the facts about what happened: e.g., “when you said / when you did...”
Judgments: what that meant to you: e.g., “my beliefs/judgments/conclusions about that are ...”)	Assessments: what that meant to you: e.g., “my interpretation, belief or conclusion about that are ...”
Feelings: how you felt/feel about it: e.g., “I felt angry...” or sad, afraid, happy, peaceful, annoyed, guilty, etc.	Expressions: how you felt/feel about it: e.g., “I felt angry...” or sad, afraid, happy, peaceful, annoyed, guilty, etc.
Wants: declare what you want for yourself, for the other person, for the team, the organization, etc.: “what I want from you/for you/for us/for the group...”	Declarations: declare what matters to you, what you want for yourself, for the other person/for the team/the organization...
Willing: what are you willing to do to move in a constructive direction: make a request, a promise, inquiry, advocacy, offer, compliment, constructive feedback, clearing, etc. to the other, e.g., “I would like you to...”	<p>Requests: what you want from others</p> <p>Promises/Agreements: what you agree or promise to do in response to a request made of you – including a simple, clear refusal, or asking for a specific time frame in order to come to your decision, or agreeing to something less</p> <p>Offers: what you offer to others as an unsolicited contribution</p> <p>Inquiries:*** what you need to ask or converse about in order to sufficiently understand something</p> <p>Advocacy:*** what you want for yourself, for others, and/or for the world</p> <p>Apology:*** what you need to say to “own” a wrongdoing to another, and ask for their forgiveness</p> <p>Compliment:*** what you want to express to another for the meaning or value they contributed in the world</p> <p>Clearing:*** what you respectfully express to another in order to be at peace in their presence</p> <p>Feedback:*** what you express with accuracy and care, in genuine service to another’s growth</p>

* adapted by Alan Gilburg and Martha Spice, Growth Dynamics, 1997

** developed by A.L. Austin, John Searles, & Fernando Flores

*** expanded by Lloyd Raines

The Complete Communication Wheel (with **Speech Acts**) can be used as a process for walking through any of the following: 1) giving a **compliment**, 2) giving **constructive feedback**, 3) “**clearing**” unsettled issues between two people, and 4) as a **mini-coaching** framework. It can also be used when **advocating** for oneself, **inquiring** of others, and **apologizing** to another. Each of these processes enhances self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management – for both the giver and receiver.

Here are examples of four of the processes:

1) Compliment:

(data) When you spoke out this morning in defense of a more collaborative process for making decisions, **(judgments)** I thought it showed a lot of courage on your part, and **(feelings)** that made me feel proud to be part of this team. **(wants)** I want you to know how much I appreciate what you did because it paved the way for each of us to have a voice, and will likely impact how we work as a team. Ultimately, we’ll be better able to serve our clients since our input will be taken seriously. **(wills)** In the future, I too will speak up in support of things that matter to me and us as a team.

2) Constructive Feedback:

(data) In our interdepartmental meeting yesterday, as you were being questioned about your report, I noticed that you became very quiet and uncharacteristically brief in your responses. **(judgment)** It appeared to me that you were retreating into yourself and withdrawing from the discussion. **(feelings)** I felt sad about that dynamic – what a loss for everyone – to see you lose your powerful voice and your ability to explain your logic behind the report’s conclusions. **(wants)** In situations when others are questioning any part of your reasoning, I want for you to see their questions as an opportunity to explain more extensively your logic, and if they present some points that you’ve overlooked or perhaps could’ve interpreted differently, to try to take that in as valuable learning – something to strengthen the report’s judgments and conclusions. **(willing)** I will continue to support you with supportive feedback whenever I sense that you are losing your power, because as a senior member of this team you’ve got a lot to say. And when you display a healthy openness to feedback it models that you are a perpetual learner – and that’s a message that will help junior members to grow from as well.

3. Clearing:

(data) After working extra hours to complete the customer satisfaction report in response to your urgent request, I didn’t hear from you one way or another for three days. **(judgments)** When I took it on, the assignment seemed to have had a pretty high priority for you and I was happy to do it because I know you’ve been under a lot of stress lately. **(feelings)** Yet, I’ve increasingly felt that my special efforts are taken for granted. It has left me feeling a bit resentful. **(wants)** I don’t want to feel that way, but instead want to feel appreciated in the same way that I appreciate your efforts. And I want us to keep the same strong working relationship we’ve had for a long time. **(willing)** My offer is to let you know when something is happening that gets in the way of our working relationship, and my request of you is that you do the same in return.

4. Mini-Coaching Framework:

Direct Report: I need your help around a difficulty I'm having with my team.

Mgr: Would you be open to me taking a coaching stance with you in this conversation?

DR: Sure, why not?

Mgr/Coach: Thank you. So, tell me briefly what the crux of the issue you're trying to figure out. (asking for **data**)

DR: Well, it seems like when we have our weekly meetings, we're doing well – a lot of things are discussed and agreed upon, yet when we have our follow-up meetings, my group has hardly done a thing in between times.

Mgr/Coach: What's your interpretation of what's going on? (asking for his/her **judgments**)

DR: I think they're not taking me seriously...like they're pretending to listen and feign enthusiasm in the meeting and then leaving the meeting and ignoring me.

Mgr/Coach: How are you feeling about that? (asking for **feelings**)

DR: Terrible. Crummy. I feel like they don't respect me.

Mgr/Coach: So, let's focus on the crux of the issue – getting work done between meetings. Is that what's at the core of your concern?

DR: Yes, that and how they're treating me.

Mgr/Coach: Okay, let's take it one at a time. What is it that you really want to happen with your team? (asking for **wants**)

DR: I want them to follow through on their promises.

Mgr/Coach: Might there be another explanation as to why they are not getting the work done that you think they should?

DR: Well, perhaps.

Mgr/Coach: When you identify some action that needs to occur, does someone volunteer or do you assign the task?

DR: Sometimes they volunteer, other times I assign them.

Mgr/Coach: Either way, is the task carefully explained, are you clear about when it is due – with a specific day and time – and what form it's to be in?

DR: Well, I tend to say that I need it ASAP.

Mgr/Coach: Might "ASAP" mean different things to different people?

DR: Yeah, maybe there is a little room for slippage there.

Mgr/Coach: What, then, are you willing to do in order to take the ambiguity out of this situation? (probing what the DR is **willing** to do to proactively address the situation)

DR: I'll make sure I explain my request more clearly – what's needed, exactly by when, and in what form. And, while I'm at it I might as well make sure I have their agreement by asking them for a verbal response that affirms what was agreed upon.

Mgr/Coach: Good thinking. Seems like you've developed a strategy for addressing the situation. When will you try this out?

DR: At next week's meeting.

Mgr/Coach: Would you be willing to check in with me afterwards and let me know how it went?

DR: Sure.

Coach: And what about the crummy feeling you're having? (probing the connection between the DR's **feelings, assessments, and judgments**)

DR: Well, I may have been way off base with my interpretation. Let me give this a try. If it doesn't work, I now see that I can ask that we all troubleshoot the problem together.

Mgr/Coach: Sounds good. Nice work.
DR: Thanks.

The **Complete Communication Wheel** provides a dynamic structure for applying the **Speech Acts** in everyday coaching and in organizational conversations. After modeling its use with a client, it's an effective tool to pass on to them. Its usefulness comes from a simple integration of numerous elements powerful in coaching conversations: it incorporates past, present, and future time slices; it draws out a broad range of available intelligence – not just the cognitive (judgments) and emotions (feelings), but also the body (data from the senses*). Each of these domains of experience offers openings to explore the conversation in more depth, “being in the question” with the intention of holding a “purposeful conversation” that moves toward self-reflection, self-correction, and generative behaviors.

* Data is experienced via the body's five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Each sensation is primary and direct, yet difficult for many people to accurately access. This is an opening for coaching since it is common that people find it difficult to make distinctions between data and their *judgments about* the data. It's slippery. People may not be aware of hidden judgments they hold that selectively shape and edit the data they take in. Bringing these discernments to light is an essential learning point, helping clients/coachees to deconstruct judgments, and “own” what is their interpretation of the data vs. what is simply data. Once something is recognized as a judgment, it allows other possible interpretations to surface – changing everything that follows in the Complete Communication Wheel process.