

What is this all about?

By Andrea Naef (excerpt of the book "If you want them to listen, talk their language")

Like so many others, I strive to live a happy and fulfilled life – and there are times when I think I'm doing quite a good job! And sometimes my days are filled with stressed-out clients, family members and friends who don't understand or are demanding, money worries, job pressures, verbalised and non-verbalised expectations...

Life is a constant problem-solving and balance-finding exercise. Each and every one of us is unique, with our very own history, values, ambitions, goals and perception of the world. And still, we voluntarily choose to live and work in social environments, where we are in constant contact with these other unique human beings. Our radar instantly detects and locks onto another person's mood, intentions and way of communicating. Although we try to cope with these differences, we still perceive the world through our very own pair of glasses – after all, you can only experience yourself.



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As a consequence we give others what we like best, be it the way we talk, the way we praise someone, or the things we like. In my free time, for example, I love to be around happy and fun people, just hanging out with them, watching a good movie or going to a cricket game or a rock concert together. My husband enjoys good conversations with interesting people, discussing politics or our business. As you can imagine, our communication styles are not always totally compatible. Nor are the ways we keep ourselves motivated, or what we consider important in life.

And so it happens that sometimes people find it very easy to perform this balancing act and sometimes we struggle to align our state of mind with somebody else's. We might be confronted with a boss who just isn't our cup of tea or we might feel trapped in a relationship that doesn't seem to have any spice left in it, or we have a job that is either unspeakably boring or too demanding...

Looking into conflicts – latent or open – we usually see a breakdown in communication. All the parties seem to be wearing blinkers and are not able to hear or make themselves heard. We might increase the volume of our voice to be heard, but usually that doesn't work out very well either. Occasionally we simply stop communicating altogether and withdraw. Astonishingly, even though we all want to be happy, we quite readily accept situations smouldering with a poisonous atmosphere in the false belief that we have to sit this out. The truth is, we don't!

Understanding myself, my needs, my frame of reference and my distress warning signs is a first step. Understanding others, *their* needs, *their* frames of reference and *their* distress signals is the second step. Being able to look after my own needs while also adapting my behaviour to suit others is a successful third step in order to build effective rapport, motivate others and win their co-operation.

The Process Communication Model® (PCM) is a method that not only explains how these processes work, but also gives you very systematic, yet pragmatic and intuitive, tools so that you can apply this knowledge in your daily life. However, excellence requires training and this of course also applies to PCM. Although the mechanics of the model are easy to grasp and understand, the skills to observe, analyse, and adjust behaviours need to be practiced continuously and regularly.

