

Mental Skill #1: Communication

*Definition: “The ability to select the right words
and right mental pictures; on demand”*

When we say the mental skill of “communication”, we are referring to the mind and what goes on inside of your head. Specifically, we are referencing your self-talk. You engaged in the act of talking to your self.

4.1.1 Guiding Principle: Outside versus inside

Outside is our communication with others; what we traditionally think when we reference communication. It’s a conversation you have with your teammate, your spouse, your kids, your friend or neighbor. You must filter words from others, yes. But more importantly, you must filter your words on the inside as well. Learn to have healthy conversations with yourself.

Science will teach you about a part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex. We are just now learning so much more about this area in the brain and the critically important roll it plays in your thinking throughout the day. The prefrontal cortex is located right behind your forehead. It is always on, always thinking, always flashing words and

mental pictures.

Some experts have referred to this area of the brain as the “good boss”. This “good boss” title implies two things. One, it’s good in the way it helps you with decision-making, problem solving, over coming challenges and conflicts. The second is that it plays a very powerful roll to seeking out threats and difficulty. When the “good boss” finds a threat from your past, present or your future it can set off the alarm system in the “bad boss”. The “bad boss” is referred to as the feeling brain and the alarm system is that emotional highjack we spoke of earlier. If you remember, during a highjack your decision-making, your learning and ability to innovate and adapt is all hindered. When the “bad boss” is in charge your body is flooded with stress hormones that if not managed properly will begin to work against you and your performance. Remember, it is your ability to flex these mental skills that empower you to recover and get the “good boss” back in charge.

Learning to become more aware of the chatter and learning to regulate the chatter is the foundation of the first mental skill. The mental skill of communication is your ability to place the right words and the right mental pictures supporting your dreams, goals and desires. This skill level is demonstrated in your ability to regulate the chatter using the right words and right mental pictures on demand and in the moment.

4.1.2 Guiding Principle: Words and Mental Pictures

You have random words and mental pictures flashing throughout the day and night without any conscious effort from you. When you're thinking or simply letting your mind wander, words and mental pictures flash through your brain. When I ask, "*What's on your mind*"? Words and mental pictures will instantly appear and these will be what you describe in your answer. If I say, "*do you remember the time...*" you will pull up stored words and mental pictures. If I say, "imagine yourself in competition tomorrow" words and

mental pictures will be what you describe. Chatter, self-talk is simply a series of random words and mental pictures. This guiding principle is a critical step in learning the five mental skills.

As you journey through each day, you will now begin to pay attention to your words and mental pictures. Basically you are paying closer attention to your self-talk or chatter. As you improve your awareness, gradually and with practice you will learn to flex this mental skill and regulate the words and mental pictures. This act of regulating is simply replacing the bad chatter with good chatter. You are learning to take the bad chatter out and place good chatter in.

The key is to remember the chatter is running without your awareness and without your efforts to regulate. As you will learn later most of the chatter is working against you. Most of the words and mental pictures that are randomly flashing in your head will tend to be negative, minor and without real reasons to even keep in your chatter.

Unaware and unregulated chatter will hold you back from achieving your dreams and your desires.

4.1.3 Guiding Principle: Negative by Design

Knowing the chatter never stops, understand it will most often seek the negative, the wrong or the threat, and it does so by design. One of the many functions of your brain is to protect. It is very similar to a security system keeping the body safe and out of harm's way.

This negative bias is another critical understanding moving forward in your development. You must seek to understand this basic negative nature. A critical lesson here is to recognize this negative bias may often set off “false-alarms” in your chatter. Your chatter will “run away” and you will start thinking about all kinds of different scenarios. This is what I call “chasing cats” or basically wasting time, talent and energy on pity chatter (thoughts that just do not matter). Your chatter takes you down a road of different situations and

circumstances that have nothing to do with the truth and that moment in time. You unintentionally focus on words and mental pictures that have very little relevance to what is important and in turn, hinder your achievement. By learning to accept this truth you begin navigating the journey and overcoming the harmful affects of unregulated chatter. Chatter that simply doesn't belong.

Your words and mental pictures will tend to focus more on what's wrong and who's to blame; more on the easy than the hard; more on hurting emotions rather than rational logic. It's a constant awareness you must work to regulate. The mental skill of communication has everything to do with your awareness and regulation of the chatter, disciplining the right words and right mental pictures on demand.

4.2 Movie Scene: Devil's Advocate

Under pressure is when these mental skills and ability serve you the best. Here is a great scene in

the movie Devil's Advocate to illustrate your talent in the face of pressure. In this scene we find Keanu Reeves and Al Pacino, the two are talking while they walk on top of a high-rise building in downtown New York. This scene is so relevant to your situation you can really bridge the gap between knowing this skill and learning to apply it in daily life.

Imagine yourself in this scene as Reeves and Pacino is your coach or recruiter:

Reeves: *"You offering me a job?"*

Pacino: *"I'm thinking about it. I know you got talent. I knew that before you got here. It's just the other thing, I wonder about."*

Reeves: *"What thing is that?"*

Pacino: *"Pressure. Changes everything, pressure. Some people you squeeze them and they focus, others fold. Can you summon your*

Mental: "Learning to regulate the chatter"

*talent at will? Can you deliver on a deadline?
Can you sleep at night?"*

Translation, can you regulate the chatter? Can you regulate the words and mental pictures even under pressure? Can you recover from toxic self-talk and re-gain your composure? It's a skill. It's your ability and the secret lies inside your chatter.

What you will come to learn and understand is that most of what's happening outside of you is uncontrollable. The focus need be on the inside, starting with your thoughts. At any given moment, any given situation throughout the day, what matters most is right here, right now and what's going on in your mind. You can learn to develop day in and day out, knowing good and well that pressure awaits. You must learn and develop these skills sets daily and throughout the day knowing that the pressure points await around every corner or next new play.

“The last place to learn CPR is at the scene of an accident; learn it first and practice often for the time in need and on demand.”

4.3.1 Guiding Principle: Truth vs. Opinion

What you are seeking in the chatter is truth. When you learn to be aware and regulate your self-talk, you must seek truth verses opinion.

Beware of opinions. Opinions are not always true; your opinions and those opinions of others must be refined before you allow them to hang out in your chatter for too long. A lot of times your chatter, as you well know, will be like a repetitive gong of trashy words and mental pictures that do not belong. The chatter will have you all over the road thinking about different kinds of stuff, most of which is hurting you and has no relevance. Seek the truth in your mind, defining words and mental pictures that reveal what is true.

4.3.2 Guiding Principle: Mental Recorder

This is another separate class by itself and a

worthy study, the subconscious mind. It is important to know and understand that as you are sitting here right now, your chatter is running. Every word, every mental picture is being recorded. You have your own internal mental recorder that captures every second of the day.

So let me ask you, what words and mental pictures do you allow to be recorded?

Beware! The recorder doesn't judge or filter for truth. It only captures what you allow in the chatter, true or not. Everyone outside can be applauding you saying, "*great job*", but in your mind, if you are beating yourself up, that's the dominant message and that is what your recorder captures. More importantly, this detail is how your brain prepares for your next performance.

You must learn to regulate the chatter today, in turn programming the recorder for the next performance. You must learn to pump positive thoughts into your mind, positive words and

mental pictures of how you desire things to be. Your recorder will capture it, and in a simplified process, prepares you for the next opportunity. This is the process of skill development over time. You must remember and accept as truth, your subconscious mind doesn't judge or censor your chatter. The recorder just captures it. There is no good word or bad word buzzer that goes off, no sense of a good or bad mental picture. The mental recorder does not censor if your chatter is true or false, beneficial or harmful. This is where your mental skills come into play when regulating.

When you take on the discipline to be aware and regulate the chatter, you force-feed the mental recorder 86,400 seconds of every day. You take your goals, your desires, your ambitions and engineer specific words and mental pictures to achieve such things, and think on them as often as possible.

When you are pumping the weight getting bigger, better and stronger you are now regulating the

chatter at the same time. When you are running plays and working on the physical fundamentals you are executing the task a thousand times over and now you are regulating the mental at the same time. If in your chatter you neglect to flex this mental-muscle your most primitive emotions will surface under pressure: fear, doubt and rage.

You know better than I all the trashy chatter that pops up, if you're not dealing with this in your own inner words and mental pictures, in the critical moment of a real competition, you will increase the odds of failure and fall to the one that does.

4.3.3 Guiding Principle: Nourish & Fight

When it comes to regulating your chatter and using your mental skill of communication, you must learn to nourish like a mother and fight like a father. You must nourish with good words and mental pictures; you must fight the bad ones.

Two agendas when it comes to, *“Hey, what does it look like acting on this mental skill of*

communication?”

It looks like you sitting right here, right now, when you leave here, when you're sitting in your vehicle, sitting on the toilet, taking a shower, any and everywhere, all day long learning to nourish and fight the chatter. It's a daily thing. No matter where you are throughout the day, your chatter is running and all of the sudden you're going to find yourself critical and beating yourself up. You are going to be more aware and regulate by flexing this mental skill of communication and replace the negative toxic chatter with nourishing words and mental pictures.

You must work to discipline yourself and regulate the chatter. You must put negative words and mental pictures in a corner or they will put you in a corner of doubt and indecision. It's like a mad dog in the house; you will remain in doubt and fear, always hesitating, never clear and forever lacking confidence. You must capture the negative words and pictures as if a father saying to an enemy,

come closer and you will cease to exist! Every time you capture this chatter and regulate it, you are flexing the mental muscle. You are fighting to defend what is near and dear to you, and only you can learn to carry on this fight.

“The fight is internal, battling within you, both good and bad battling to control one thing, your chatter”

When it comes to nourishing like a mother, you must learn to talk nicely to yourself. You must put good words and good mental pictures in your chatter. Learn to rely on yourself as the primary provider for the nourishing words and mental pictures you need. In the study of emotional intelligence, we call this “self-reliance”. This is where you learn to rely on your own words and mental pictures rather than relying on others around.

Yes, we need words and positive influence from those around us, yes! Yes, it is always nice to hear it from a coach. There is no debate here;

even the scriptures validate the notion of fellowship and two becoming stronger than one. However, don't rely on the external folks as your primary source. You must play the primary role for your own personal nourishment. Do not rely solely on your coach, your family member or someone else outside of you. You do it. It's your discipline, your gift and your promise for the future. When I say, "*Nourish like a mother,*" you must find times in your 86-4 (short for 86,400 seconds) when you're saying, "*I can, I will, I see, I know, it's coming, it's possible.*"

Sometimes you must learn to muster-up the courage to find new words and mental pictures which face your fears. Truth be told, your next great achievement hasn't happened yet; you've yet to experience it. You can experience it in the mind with disciplined chatter and the courage to see yourself winning. A strong mental skill of communication will slowly nourish and condition your beliefs building confidence and self-esteem.

You must first believe it for yourself using the right words and right mental pictures in your chatter. You are going to have to use words and mental images that are new to you when you visualize your next achievements. You must learn to “see” yourself beyond your circumstances with new words and mental pictures. We will talk more about this need for new chatter later in the book.

As a wise point of reference, the scriptures teach to think on whatever is kind, loving, true and honorable. These are your new guidelines for filtering (regulating) your chatter.

4.3.4 Guiding Principle: Conditioning

Your chatter, randomly wandering each second of the day, is captured into your mental recorder. Over time, as the chatter runs rampant and always being recorded, the dominant words and mental pictures create connections in the brain. We call this conditioning, where the connections create habits and are formed by repetitive thoughts. Your attitude for example is often the result of repetitive

chatter over time. In our skill development we learn that attitude is nothing more than a habit of thinking. A habit that has been created and conditioned based on your chatter.

The dominant words and mental pictures are those that you repeat over and over again in the chatter, called repetitive thought. These dominant impressions from your chatter impact your own personal beliefs and challenge your own personal value. Before you know it, you've conditioned yourself to act and respond based on random chatter that does not support your dreams or desires.

It is important to understand how conditioning works to affect your skills, confidence, and self-esteem. Conditioning even affects how you manage your relationships. We now understand how the chatter can condition positively and negatively. It all depends on you and your chatter. By learning to develop and understand this truth on conditioning you can use it to your advantage.

By regulating the chatter with specific words and mental pictures of good performance, you are conditioning. In other words, during the 86,400 seconds of your day, chatter is running, the recorder is capturing. You must learn to condition yourself to make more mature decisions based on what's going on in your chatter.

4.3.5 Guiding Principle: The “Fish Tank”

Promise

A wise mentor shared this story with me over twenty years ago. This will help you understand the process you are starting as you learn to regulate and apply these new mental skills.

Imagine a large fish tank filled with coffee. This dingy, dark looking water is the result of poor conditioning over time, allowing the chatter to run rampant and unregulated. We've all been poorly programmed by allowing negative, unworthy chatter to run rampant, making false and toxic impressions.

Now, imagine a hose of fresh, clear running water and you put it into the fish tank, leaving it over time. What happens to the dark, dingy water? With continued effort of fresh water coming in, the dingy water is out and the new clear water fills the tank.

As you continue seeking new insights and learning to flex your mental skills, refining your chatter is the fresh, clear running water. You are the hose and you are putting new words and new mental pictures into the mental fish tank, reprogramming and reconditioning from within. This takes time and discipline and it's reserved for only the few willing to look inside.

Notes & Quotes:

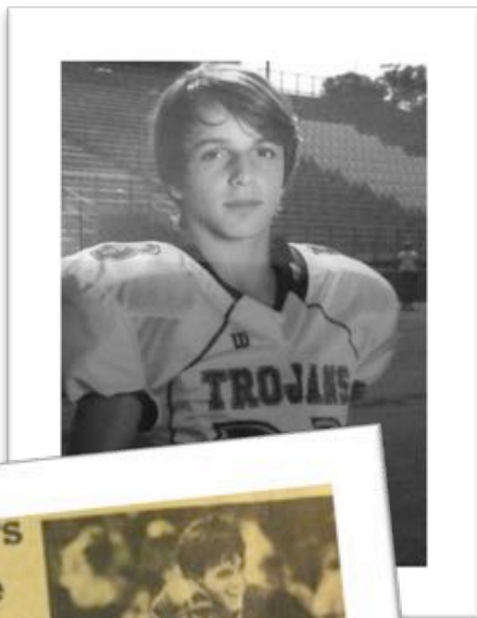
1. Dr. Daniel Goleman - Latest findings on the brain: Emotional Intelligence Webinar
 - www.danielgoleman.info
2. Robert Sapolsky – Stanford University
Professor, “Distress: The Body’s Silent Killer”
– National Geographic Documentary
 - http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/professors/professor_detail.aspx?pid=124
3. History Channel’s Documentary: “The Brain”
2013
4. Les Brown – Author, public speaker
 - <http://lesbrown.com/>
5. Jim Rohn – Author, public speaker
 - <http://www.jimrohn.com/>
6. Dr. Jeff Garrison – Sport Medicine, Former NFL player

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- <http://mollydaniels.wordpress.com/>

To all those who have encouraged, remained patient and persevered on my behalf by continuing to stay on me. As God as my witness, your words remained in my chatter and were a critical part of making this dream become a reality.



Mavs, Pats win openers in Lafayette Semistate

By FRED LANE
Staff Sports Writer

McCutcheon's big-play baseball team edged Logansport, 5-3, in the second game of the opening round of the Lafayette Semistate Saturday afternoon.

The Mavericks, 24-14, advanced to the semistate title game Saturday night against Terre Haute North. The Patriots coasted in a 4-0 victory over Perry Meridian in the day's opener.

The two games were played before a crowd of about 1,500 at Losh Stadium in Columbian Park.

McCutcheon produced a pair of clutch hits and several sparkling defensive saves to eliminate three-time state champ Logansport.

With McCutcheon leading 2-1 in the top of the third inning, Steve Robinson — a senior batting .247 — lined a two-out, two-run single.

Logansport added single runs in the third and fourth innings to even the lead to 2-2. Matt Barry Taylor added an insurance run for the Mavericks in the top of the fifth.

Taylor, who finished with three hits in three at bats, found a soft spot in center field which was misplayed by Jerry Hunter. The ball rolled to the center field fence, and Robinson

McCutcheon Coach Jake Burton. "He had an excellent year last year, but has been struggling at the plate this season.

"It's easy to get frustrated with a bad season, but Steve never quit. And today, he came through with a big, big hit for us and made a super play in right field, too."

In the bottom of the sixth, Robinson dove into foul territory to catch a fly ball for the first out.

Jay House finished the Barron in the sixth, catching a foul pop near the Logansport dugout, and batting down Snider's hard-hit ground ball for an unassisted play for the third out.

And Brian Robinson — brother of Steve — added the final Maverick defensive jewel, diving to catch Tony Baldwin's line drive at third base for the second out of the seventh inning.

"We hit it where they weren't, but they got there anyhow," laughed Logansport Coach Jim Turner, whose team finished with a 23-8 record.

"Baseball is a game of inches, and those inches worked their way. Plus, McCutcheon played an outstanding game."

McCutcheon's Dan Payne allowed two earned runs on eight hits, and the senior pitched his fourth straight com-



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