

Thomas Gordon's 12 Roadblocks to Communication*

Responses that communicate unacceptance:

- 1 Ordering, commanding, directing
Example: "Stop whining and do something about your life"
- 2 Warning, threatening
Example: "You better stop drinking or you might end up like your father"
- 3 Moralizing, preaching, giving "shoulds" and "ought tos"
Example: "You should make sure you always go to a party with people who will watch out for you"
- 4 Advising, offering solutions or suggestions
Example: "I think you need to start going to church or join a group so you will be busy on the weekends"
- 5 Teaching, lecturing, giving logical arguments
Example: "Read this book about depression because it has helped a lot of people and could help you"

Responses that communicate inadequacies and faults:

- 6 Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming
Example: "You never follow through on what you say you will do"
- 7 Name-calling, stereotyping, labeling
Example: "You are a typical freshman—like to party and play a lot"
- 8 Interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing
Example: "You probably had parents who were high achievers and therefore you are attempting to differentiate yourself from the way they behave"

Other Messages that attempt to avoid the issues or problems:

- 9 Praising, agreeing, giving positive evaluations
Example: "You are a really smart so don't worry—you will probably stop smoking marijuana daily once you graduate"
- 10 Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling, supporting
Example: "I totally understand why you did what you did and I would have done the same in your -situation—I am sure the judge will be understanding"

Responses that tend to try to solve the problem:

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Questioning, probing, interrogating, cross-examining

Example: “So why didn’t you seek help sooner instead of waiting to get in trouble for your use of drugs?”

Responses that tend to divert from the issue at hand:

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Withdrawing, distracting, being sarcastic, humoring, diverting

Example: “I love your t-shirt--where did you get that?”

Factors That Affect Listening:



Bias

- Personal prejudice
- Anger
- Your own experiences



Environmental factors

- Noise
- Temperature
- Uncomfortable seating/surrounding



Short Attention Span

- Distracted
- Pre-occupied with other matters
- Daydreaming



Rehearsing a response

- Excited to speak
- Wanting “your turn”
- Relating to the topic at hand



“Hot” words

- Words that “push” buttons
- Inflammatory language



Filtering

- Picking and choosing what we want to hear

*Thomas Gordon is the author of Teacher Effectiveness Training, Parent Effectiveness Training and other books about effective communication. In the third edition of the Motivational Interviewing, Miller and Rollnick refer to his work as it relates to effective listening.