



THE MINDFUL

COMMUNICATION

GUIDE

Rachael Kable

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A practical, fun and simple guide to creating meaningful communication and expressing your opinions, needs and thoughts in powerful ways.

Welcome to the Communication Guide, which accompanies the communication mini-series of The Mindful Kind podcast (episodes 101 to 107). In this guide, we'll be covering various topics to do with communication, such as assertiveness, public speaking, simple ways to practice communicating and moving on from challenging communication situations.

Feel free to print this workbook out, grab a pen and make your way through the tips and activities. I hope you enjoy it and I'd love to hear how you go!

Here are the modules we'll be covering:

- Module 1** Introduction to Communication
- Module 2** Assertiveness
- Module 3** Public Speaking
- Module 4** Encouraging Other People to Communicate
- Module 5** Simple Ways to Practice Communicating
- Module 6** Communicating With Yourself
- Module 7** Moving on From Challenging Communication

Module One: Introduction to Communication

Everyone has their own experiences with communication and stories to share about it, from saying the wrong thing or making an inappropriate joke, to being there for someone during a meaningful conversation.

The good news is that communication skills can be learned, practised and applied in everyday life and this guide will share some super simple, practical and interesting tips, as well as helpful exercises!

You might like to think about your own experiences with communication and write down a few things which went well and a few things you could improve.

For example, an experience with communication I had recently was when I asked for a takeaway container for my food after my partner and I went out for dinner. Things I did well were being assertive, asking for what I wanted and being polite. Things I could improve were being more accepting of the awkward feelings I felt (rather than judging myself for them) and being more friendly as I tend to smile less when I'm feeling awkward.

Now, it's your turn!

The experience:

Things I did well:

Things I could improve:

The experience:

Things I did well:

Things I could improve:

The experience:

Things I did well:

Things I could improve:

Of the things you could improve, start putting them into practice. You could literally start a conversation for the purpose of using your communication skills or go a little out of your comfort zone.

It can also be really important to find someone to talk to when you're feeling lonely, or you need to talk.

Here are my top tips!

**Try calling a Helpline, like Beyond Blue,
Lifeline, or Relationships Australia.**

Attend in-person support groups

Organise a catch up with a friend

Talk to your GP (who can also refer you to a psychologist)

**Visit a health professional for specific advice,
such as a sleep expert, dietitian,
massage therapist, or coach**

Module Two: Assertiveness

Assertiveness is about being able to stand up for yourself and your needs, or ask for what you want, without being aggressive. It's about being able to stay calm and communicate in a way which is respectful of yourself and others.

And it's not necessarily about getting things your way or making people agree with you- it's simply about being heard and at least getting your point across in an appropriate way.

What does assertiveness mean to you?

TIPS FOR BEING MORE ASSERTIVE

1. Try seeing things from other people's perspectives.

For example, if I received the wrong meal at a café, I think the staff would actually like to know so they could fix the mistake. I could let them know in a polite and respectful way so that everyone gets what they want (I receive the meal I ordered and the owner of the café has a happy customer).

2. Know that it's alright to change your mind.

If you say “yes” to something, it doesn't mean you have to keep saying “yes” for the rest of your life! You're allowed to change your mind.

3. Try not take it personally if someone doesn't respond well to your assertiveness.

At the end of the day, you're doing what is right for you and that's really important. We can't control how other people react, and often it doesn't have much to do with us, but more to do with them. I try to tap into compassion when someone doesn't react well to me being assertive because I have no idea what's going on for them in their life.

4. Be assertive sooner, rather than later.

If you put off being assertive and think about it too much, it often becomes harder to do because you can talk yourself out of it. So, try not to overthink it and just give it a try!

5. Be non-judgemental if being assertive doesn't go how you planned.

Like walking, assertiveness is a skill which you learn and become better at. It's normal to stumble a few times, and if you do, learn what you can and just keep moving forward.

In the spaces below, write down three possible scenarios of how you could be assertive in the future:

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Scenario 3

Module Three: Public Speaking

Below, you'll find all my best tips for public speaking. I find that some strategies work better in different situations, which is why I thought I'd just share everything and you can pick and choose depending on what feels right.

The first ten tips are particularly useful for presenting well, while the rest are useful for managing stress in regards to speaking.

Rate each tip out of 10 based on how confident you are about it (1 being not confident at all and 10 being very confident).

Tip 1. Know that it's totally normal to feel scared, nervous, stressed, overwhelmed, terrified, anxious.

Tip 2. If you're speaking at an event, don't leave decisions until the last minute. Know how you will travel to the venue, how you'll do your hair, what you're going to wear and what you're going to talk about.

Tip 3. Prepare for the possibility of going blank. Try to have note cards or some other memory tool to use, just in case!

Tip 4. Speaking of memory tools, there are quite a few to choose from. Note cards can be really useful, but so are slides, props and workbooks, which the audience can fill in as you go. Try not to read things word for word though, as you may lose engagement with your audience.

- Tip 5.** Another helpful strategy can be the use of mnemonic devices, otherwise known as a technique which aids memory. Feel free to Google “mnemonic devices” if you’d like to learn more.
- Tip 6.** Include interactive sections within your talk.
- Tip 7.** Start with something simple, which you’re really familiar with.
- Tip 8.** Use your hands. If you’re not sure what to do, try watching a few TED talks as these speakers often do a great job of using body language to captivate an audience and help tell their story.
- Tip 9.** Look at the people you’re talking to and connect with them.
- Tip 10.** Remember to keep going, even if it seems like the audience has lost focus. People do have short attention spans!
- Tip 11.** Breathe. I have a tendency to want to talk really quickly and fill every little silence, but there’s 2 reasons why I’ve slowly been training myself not to do this. One; not breathing properly can increase stress and two; pauses actually work really well in presentations to allow for information to sink in.

Tip 12. Do some exercise in the hours before your presentation. I find that it can be really helpful to channel nervous energy in a positive way and also release endorphins which tend to boost self-esteem.

Tip 13. Remember that you probably don't appear as nervous as you feel.

Tip 14. Try to balance out negative thoughts with positive ones.

Tip 15. Know that what you want to say matters.

Now choose **three** of the tips you're the least confident about (or which you would most like to improve) and practice them!

The tips I would like to improve on are...

Tip:

Tip:

Tip:

Module Four: Encouraging Other People to Communicate

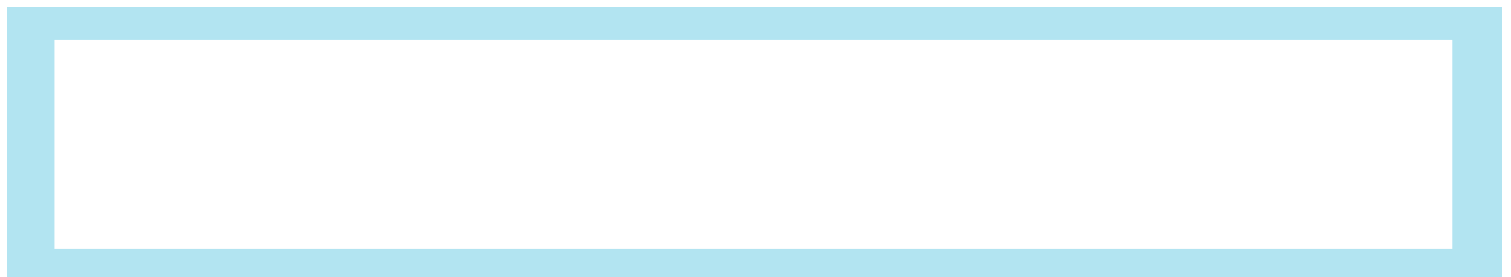
For some people, learning to communicate well can be really difficult and it might help to have encouragement from others and safe spaces to talk.

Here are a few ideas;

Create a supportive environment to practice communicating in.

Think about how you feel when you're learning something new- you might feel vulnerable, self-conscious, overwhelmed, anxious. It's really important that the environment you practice communicating in, or the environment you create for someone else to safely communicate in, feels as comfortable and non-threatening as possible.

Where are the places you feel most comfortable?



Use open ended questions.

For example:

Could you explain more about how you're feeling?

What are some of the thoughts going through your mind at the moment?

Can you tell me what happened?

Asking an open-ended question is actually an active listening skill and I spoke more about it on episode 24 of [The Mindful Kind podcast](#). Other active listening skills include using non-verbal cues to show your attention, such as nodding, smiling and keeping open body language- for example, having uncrossed arms and legs. Paraphrasing and confirming can also be useful active listening skills, where you repeat the general gist of what someone has told you and ask them if you've got it right.

Offer rewards for communicating efforts.

For example, *when I felt proud of myself for sharing an opinion, being assertive, or getting through a challenging conversation, I would do something nice. Perhaps sit down and enjoy a coffee, engage in a creative activity like photography, or read a book. Positive rewards you can easily give someone else when they've been open with you include a hug, or a compliment for their honesty. Anything which can help end the experience on a positive note and potentially, increase the person's confidence with communicating next time.*

List the positive rewards you could give yourself or others



Module Five: Simple Ways to Practice Communicating

SOCIAL MEDIA

It's a brilliant tool to help you connect with people and practice communicating. There are heaps of different ways you can use it, so I thought I would share a list of my top tips:

- Tip 1.** Send a private message to someone you care about.
- Tip 2.** Reach out to someone you admire and let them know the impact they've had.
- Tip 3.** If you see someone post about a difficulty in their life or they're not having such a good day, send them a few words of support.
- Tip 4.** Use tags to show people you've been thinking of them. For example, tag a friend on a post which reminds you of them.

LETTER WRITING

Not all communication has to be verbal and I think letter writing is such a beautiful practice. I'm just starting to get into the habit of writing thankyou cards to people who have helped me, rather than just sending emails. I think it can be a more meaningful way to connect and you never know how much your kind words can brighten someone else's day. And don't forget, if you would like to receive a letter from someone, why not just ask them instead of just waiting and hoping?

WALKING AND TALKING

Going for a walk with someone can be a great opportunity to talk more and practice communicating. Why not give it a try this weekend?!


INITIATE CONVERSATIONS

Spark a short conversation with friendly strangers, such as a retail assistant, saying hello as you pass someone on a walking track, talking to someone on public transport, introducing yourself at an event or any other opportunity you can take just to say hello and ask someone how they are.

CREATE MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION HABITS

These can be little activities throughout your days which allow opportunities for conversation. Going for a coffee in the mornings with a work colleague, walking around the block with your partner or a family member each night, calling someone once a week, writing to a penpal, going to yoga classes once a week with a friend and getting dinner afterwards... There are so many different ways we can fit little habits into our lives where we can practice communicating and deepen our connections with people.

**Write down all the little ways you could
introduce more communication into your life:**



Module Six: Communicating With Yourself

Being able to communicate with yourself is such a wonderful way to not only help you feel more supported, nourished and cared for, but it allows you to then have more capacity to communicate with others and be there for them.

Below, I'll share three strategies for improving the communication you have with yourself and I'd love to hear how you go with them, so please come over to my social media, especially Instagram [@rachaekable](#), and let me know.

STRATEGY ONE - MEDITATE

***There are so many different ways to meditate**, for example, you can lie on your bed with your legs up the wall and your arms out to the side, just feeling your body relax and noticing any thoughts which might be calling out for your attention.*

You could sit on a cushion with your legs crossed, even just for a couple of minutes and become aware of your breath.

You can also use a mindfulness practice while you spend time in nature and for more tips on that, be sure to watch [episode 3 of The Mindful Kind Video Blog](#) on Youtube as I talk about and show you how to be mindful around nature!

STRATEGY TWO - JOURNAL

One technique is to complete morning pages (a technique originally shared by Julia Cameron), where you simply write three pages in the morning about anything.

Another technique is to collect a few prompts and use those each day, such as:

Which thoughts are appearing regularly for me at the moment?

How does my body feel?

What am I working towards and how do I feel about it?

What am I grateful for?

Which emotions have I been experiencing a lot lately?

Another option for journaling is to use a journal with prompts and guides already there for you to just fill in. Here is the link to all my favourite journals:

<http://www.rachaelkable.com/blog/the-best-journals-for-2018-with-fun-journaling-prompts-powerful-tips>

STRATEGY THREE - CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

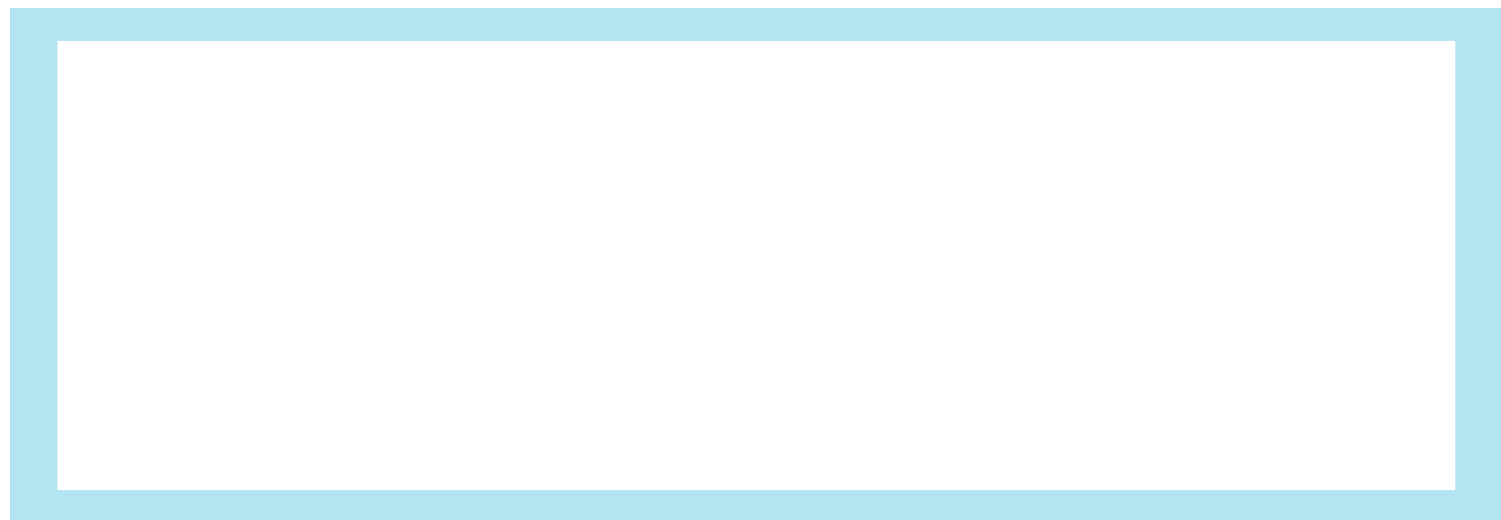
Simply take a moment to ask yourself **“how am I feeling and what am I thinking?”**

One interesting thing to note about exploring feelings, is that you don't just have to give them a name.

Try exploring how your emotions actually feel in your body- where you can notice them causing tension, relaxation, or any other sensation, whether you can identify a colour with that feeling, or a symbol which represents the feeling.

For example, right now, I'm feeling especially loving and kind and I can notice a lightness in my chest and a hint of a smile on my lips. I identify these feelings with summer and bright colours, like yellow and pink. I also notice my posture is more open, more welcoming.

How would you describe what you're feeling at the moment?



Module Seven: Moving on From Challenging Communication

Here are a few tips which can help you move forward from challenging communication situations.

Tip 1 - Be honest

First of all, it's often a great idea to be honest. *If you've tried communicating and it didn't turn out so well, don't just bottle it all up and beat yourself up over it and pretend like everything's fine. Tell someone who cares about you and have a laugh about it, or talk about what you could do better next time, or just get a cuddle and some reassurance that you did your best.*

Tip 2 - Engage in self-care

Depending on how you're feeling, it might be a good idea to take some time to really look after yourself and do nice things, *like reading a book, or going out to a café for breakfast, or doing yin yoga. Make a point of showing yourself some love and care whenever you're feeling low or hurt or challenged, and it will become a part of your natural response to hard times.*

Tip 3 - Explore outside your comfort zone

Tip three is to explore outside your comfort zone, *but also respect your needs and boundaries*

Tip 4 - Practice mindfulness when ruminating

Practice mindfulness whenever you find yourself ruminating over past communication mistakes, or worrying about upcoming communication opportunities. For some really simple mindfulness practices, you might like to check out episode 70 of *The Mindful Kind* podcast.

However, a really simple mindfulness practice to use whenever you notice your thoughts running rampant is to place one hand on your chest and one hand on your tummy and just feel the movement of your breath going in and out of your body.

Thank you!

Thank you so much for downloading this workbook and well done for making it all the way to the end. I hope you've enjoyed using this resource and that it may come in useful in the future, too.

It would really mean a lot to me if you could snap a photo of the cover and share it on social media (don't forget to tag me so I can see!) and let your friends know they can also download this workbook for free and listen to the whole mini-series about communication via my website, iTunes and Spotify.

I hope you have a wonderful, mindful day!

***With love,
Rach xx***