

# beyond BRANDING

by MONTE WILSON

The meaning of your communication... is the response you get.

While doing your best to persuade a potential client to purchase your product, out of the blue and for no apparent reason, he becomes angry with you. What do you do?

As you are seeking to express your love to your significant other, he or she interrupts you with a question about an item on their grocery list. What do you say?

After what you believe to be a kick-butt presentation that will certainly go a long way toward helping individuals to be wiser in their future choices of behavior, these same individuals go out and behave as they always have. What now?



**“The meaning of your communication... is the response you get.”**

For some people, in such cases as the above, the tendency is to place blame on the audience.

“You need to ask your doctor to up your meds.”

“You are so hardhearted.”

“Humans are so foolish/sinful/brain dead.”

“Well, yeah, Wilson, I was clear. I used monosyllabic words. I augmented my presentation with PowerPoint/music/meaningful illustrations. The failure to realize my intended outcome is on him/her/them.”

Maybe so... but what if...

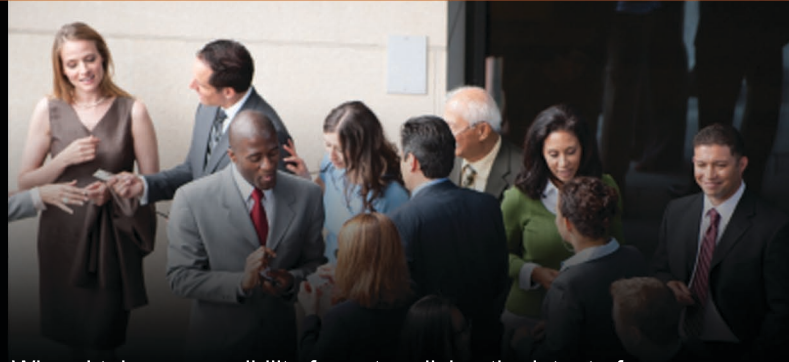
What if you took a different approach to those circumstances where you see that you are not leading your audience in the desired direction? What if you presupposed that whatever it is your audience is hearing you say ... *Is What You Are Saying*. What if you—if we—took responsibility for the effects of our communication? I am not speaking of “moral responsibility” here but about a communication strategy.

“While I did not intend to make this guy angry, something I did or said set him off.”

“I obviously am not connecting as I intend.”

“Clearly, I wasn’t clear!”

What is more important to you: your strategy or your goals? If Being Right about your strategy is more important to you than the goal of your communication, I suggest you need to rethink your priorities.



When I take responsibility for not realizing the intent of my communication, I maintain freedom and power. However, if I make the failure to realize my intentions about the audience, I am now stuck and powerless to make the difference I wanted to make.

As long as I maintain responsibility for achieving the intention of my communication, I will remain flexible. “This didn’t work, I need to take a different tact, adopt a new strategy.” As soon as I place the responsibility on my audience to hear and respond as I intend and they do not do as I wish, it is over.

You tried.

He/she/they didn’t get it.

The End.

But what if ...

If the recitation of facts didn’t achieve your outcome, what about telling a carefully constructed story?

If saying “I love you” doesn’t communicate as you intended, what if you demonstrate your love? Novel idea, I know ... just saying. (“I did that. It didn’t work.” Then design other ways, ways that communicate to them!)

If extolling the rewards of behaving in such-and-such a manner and piling on examples of disastrous consequences if your audience doesn’t heed your words fails to achieve your outcome, what about a skit—a theatrical performance by actors—which puts flesh and bones to your message?

Are there times when it is about them? Are there circumstances where I need to drop it, let it go, move on? Sure. Yet, before you do this, I suggest you ask yourself how critical is it that you achieve your desired outcomes. Moreover, even if you think you have done everything you know to do, what if you took a position that says, “Okay, I need to let it go, for now,” trusting that in the future you will design a more efficacious strategy?

