



Rowing Together Through Effective Communication



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Agenda



- Communication & Human Nature
- Communication Disconnects
- Typical Testing Communication
- Improving Relationships and Communication
- Identifying and Meeting Your Needs
- Developing Collaborative Solutions
- Summary

DISCLAIMER



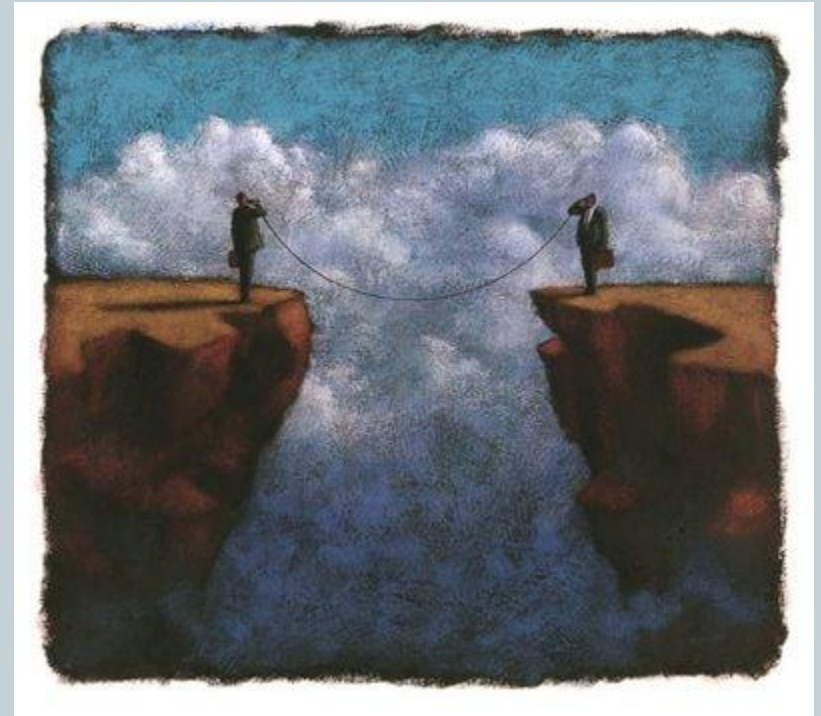
WARNING: There is a wealth of knowledge, books and entire professions based on interpersonal communication. This discussion is focused on sharing our observations and communication techniques in facilitating effective relationships between testers and project managers.

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Communication & Human Nature



- What is communication?
- When two or more people communicate it is fascinating to observe
- Examine the differences between the message intended by the sender and the message interpreted by the receiver
- Lets try a couple of simple exercises to represent this...



When I say...what do you hear ?



Black

Up

Right

Day

Young

What Happened?

- The brain translates what is heard and responds with the opposite:

Black -> White

Up -> Down

Right -> Left

Day -> Night

Young -> Old



Do You See What I See?

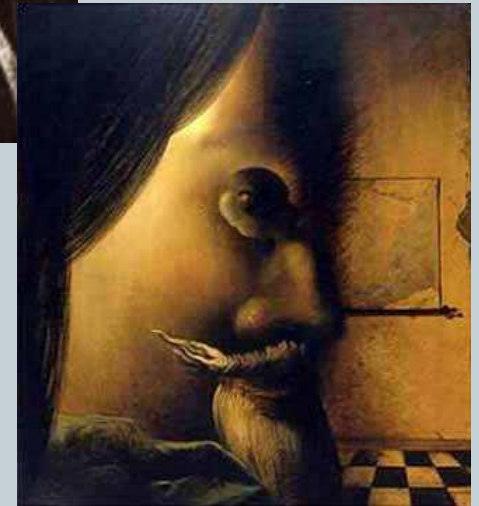


Do You See What I See?



What did we See?

- Let's view the pictures again
 - What do you see?
 - What do I see?
- What can be learned about each others perspective?



Get me a Rock



What Happened?



- A rock is a rock...
...isn't it?
- Seldom are things are obvious as they may seem
- All forms of communication leave a lot of room for interpretation



Communication Disconnects

- Numerous factors to consider
- Geographical, cultural, environmental and educational differences
- Individual experience, perspective, personality and preference differences
- Context is another major factor



Typical Testing Communication

- Why doesn't my PM give me the time testing needs?
- Why are the testers always asking for more time?
- Why is there any debate on this, it is clear we need to test this?
- Why do testers always see everything as a risk?
- Why doesn't the developer see this is obviously a defect?



Project Role Play Exercise



- Typical Development Project Role Play
- ~60 Minute Exercise
- Require volunteers to represent the following roles:
 - Project Manager
 - Test Lead or Tester

Which boat are you in?



Sharing Valuable Information or Noise?

- Differing perspectives on the “value” of information
- Project Managers
 - Often comment on the dialogue from their testers with analogies to “lots of noise” and “too much fuss”
- Testers
 - Often comment on the dialogue with their project managers as frustrating; a lack of feeling understood and appreciated



The Loss of Valuable Information

- Communication roadblocks can prevent valuable information from being:
 1. Effectively understood
 2. Acted upon
- Communication disconnects can occur on both sides



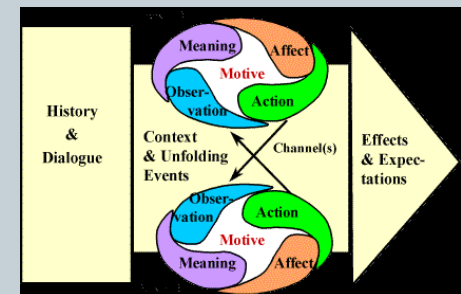
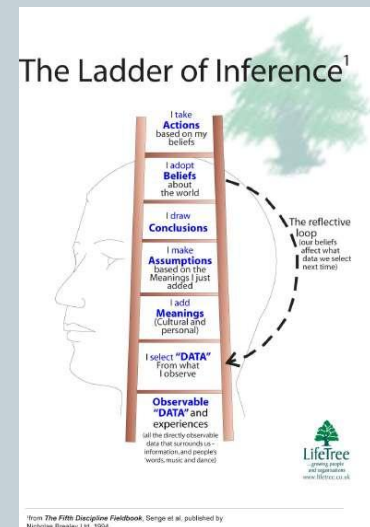
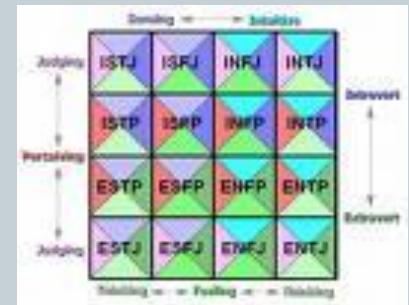
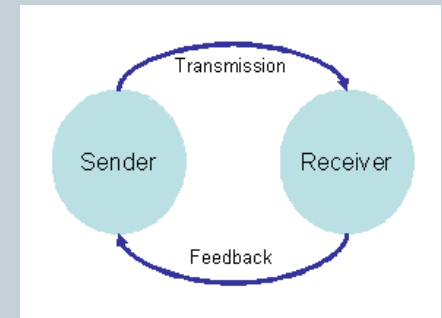
Impact of Information Disconnects

- Impact can be significant
 - Misdirected test strategies due to misunderstood project mandate, scope or schedule
 - Project success jeopardized due to misinterpreted quality related information
- Impacts are often far reaching due to ripple effects



Improving Relationships & Communication

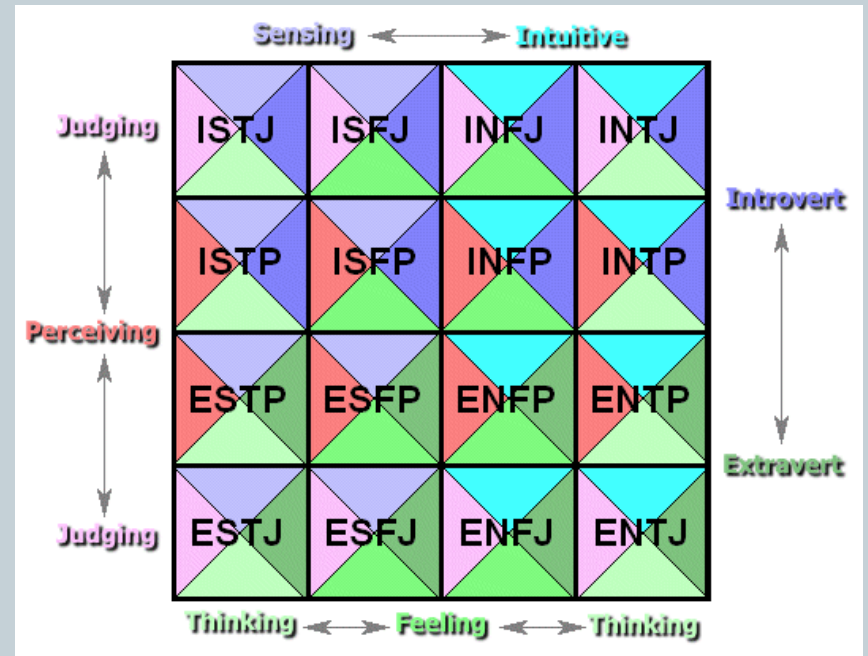
- Extensive communication related tools available
- Let's look closer at the following:
 - Personality Types
 - Habit #5
 - Aikido Sequence
 - Congruence Model



Personality Types



- Understanding the personality types of others is valuable in determining communication approach
- Various assessment tools
- Myers Briggs
 - Four dichotomies
 - ✦ Extraversion - Introversion
 - ✦ Sensing - Intuition
 - ✦ Thinking - Feeling
 - ✦ Judgment - Perception
 - E.g. ESTJ - Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judgment

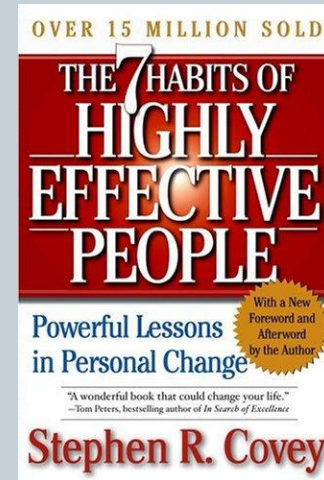


Myers Briggs Personality Types

Habit #5



- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People includes principles of mutual understanding
- Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood
- Most people seek first to be understood in an effort to get their point across



“Seek First to Understand,
Then to be Understood”

- *Steven R. Covey*

Aikido Sequence



- **Center**
 - Centre (yourself)
 - Breathe calmly and concentrate your energy in the centre of your body
- **Enter**
 - Enter (your opponent's attack)
- **Turn**
 - Turn (your opponent's attack to your own advantage or in the direction you want to go)
- **To influence others you need to connect with their reality**

*"I want
considerate people
to listen to the
voice of Aikido.
It is not for
correcting others;
it is for correcting
your own mind."*

*Morihei Ueshiba 1883-1969
Founder of Aikido*



Congruence Model

- Balance among Self, Other and Context
- Each part is equally important
- When we pay attention to each in equal measures, we can act balanced or congruent
- There are 8 congruence coping patterns

Congruence Model

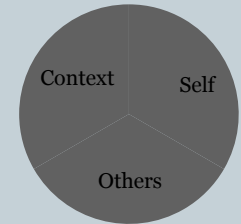


Congruence – Coping Patterns



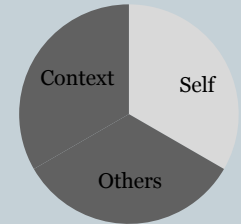
- **Congruent**

- All parts are balanced; self, others and context



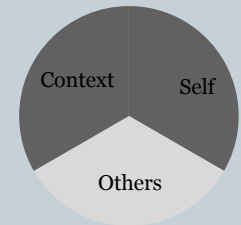
- **Placating**

- Sacrifices Self to conform to the wishes of the Other or the constraints of the Context



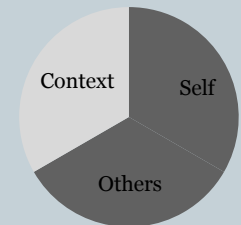
- **Blaming**

- Fails to give adequate value to Other



- **Loving/Hating**

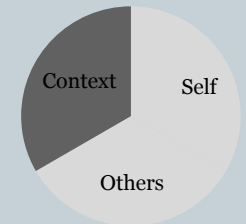
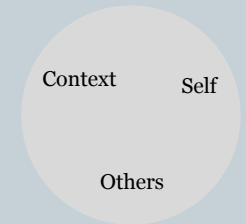
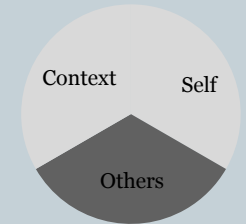
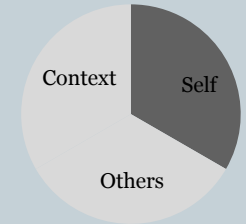
- Driven by relationship with other ideas, people or organizations



Congruence – Coping Patterns



- **Narcissistic**
 - Adopts any interpretation that permits it to continue to see itself as flawless
- **Infatuated**
 - Driven by complete devotion to something external to Self
- **Irrelevant**
 - Fails to take account for any of the elements
- **Super-reasonable**
 - Emphasizes Context, usually through a devotion to "objectivity" and at the expense of Self or Others



Interactive Negotiation Exercise

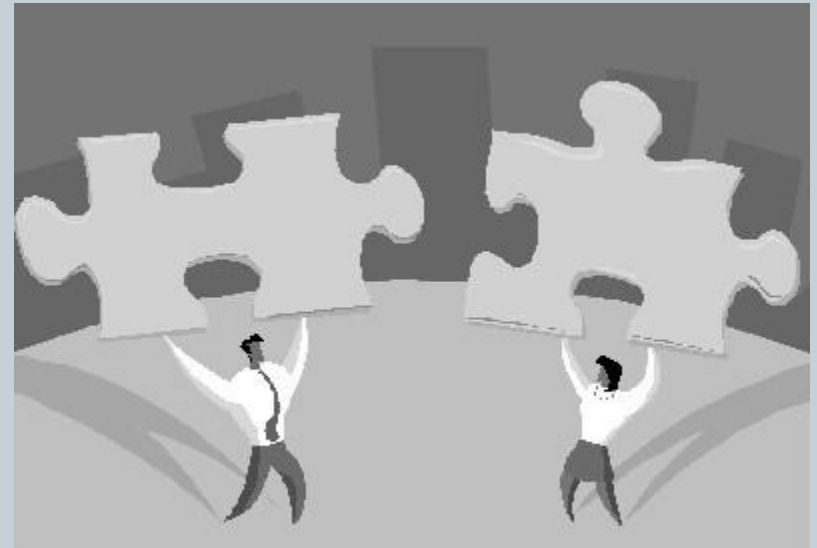
- Ugli Orange Exercise
- ~30 Minutes



Improving Project Communication

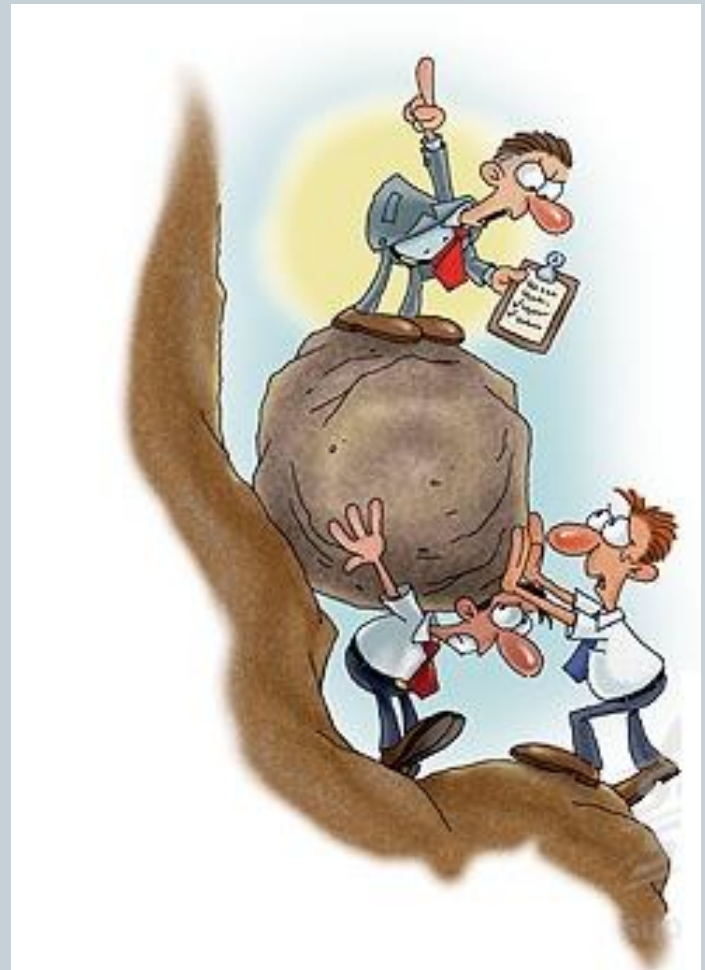


- Respect and value roles and individuals
- Share perspectives on goals, objectives, outcomes
- Identify synergies and opportunities to support each other
- Define communication expectations
- Collaborate to solve project challenges



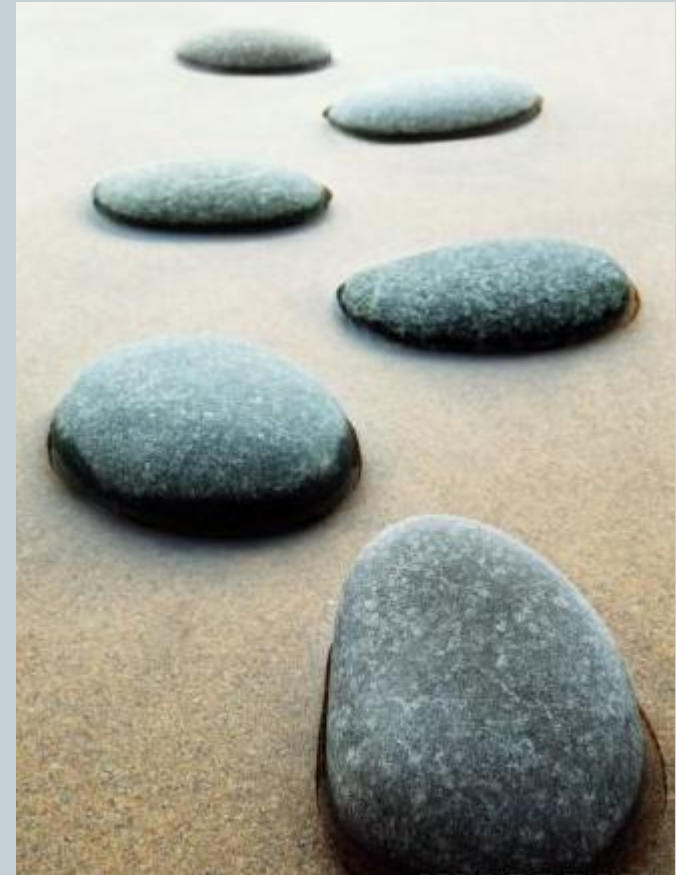
Identify & Meet Your Needs as a Tester

- Communicating the needs of testing can be challenging
- Ensure you are engaged from project inception in order to understand the stakeholder goals and expectations
- Increase the effectiveness of the “sell” by aligning with achieving the stakeholder goals



Sales Process

- The “sell” of the test effort on a project can be likened to the sales process
- The stages of the Counsellor sales process are:
 - Stage 1 Relating
 - Stage 2 Discovering
 - Stage 3 Advocating
 - Stage 4 Supporting



The Sales Process & Testing



1. Relating – Establishing Trust

- As a tester joining a new project team, focus on establishing trust
- Develop groundwork to get to know each other and share the value you bring to the project

2. Discovering – Uncovering Needs and Motives

- Focus on understanding stakeholder goals and expectations
- Seek to understand for the project as a whole and then specifically for quality

The Sales Process & Testing



3. Advocating – Solving Problems & Meeting Personal Motives

- Focus on how to position the strategy, needs, concerns, etc of the test effort. Highlight the advantages and the benefits from the solution you are proposing.
- Advantages - “How does it solve the problem (lack of time, resources, budget, quality, etc)?”
- Benefits - “What does it do for the project manager or stakeholders?”

4. Supporting – Process of Reassuring

- You have successfully gained buy-in to solution your problem, implemented that solution and now you need to follow up on the success.

Identify & Meet Your Needs as a PM



- Actively engage testers from project inception through closure
- Be mindful test efforts are often more complex than may meet the eye
- Encourage communication and provide guidance
- Recognize the value of a skilled tester and their key role in project success



Areas of Focus for Testing Communication



- Collaborate and define the communication goals and expectations early
- Establish communication expectations for all aspects of the test effort
- Consider the timing, frequency, format, audience, etc
- Consensus will limit surprises and misunderstandings



Developing Collaborative Solutions

- Even the best of projects are likely to encounter challenges
- Collaboration is important for project managers and testers
- Test team needs to engage in solving common project challenges
 - Scope changes
 - Development delays
 - Insufficient time for testing



Wrap Up Exercise



- Review learning from Role Playing exercise
- Identify opportunities to incorporate techniques covered to improve outcomes
- ~15-30 minutes

Summary



- Key success factors for communication between project managers and testers include:
 - Building a collaborative partnership
 - Ensuring the tester's awareness of stakeholder goals and expectations
 - Define the areas of focus for communication of the test effort
 - Collaboratively solution the challenges of the project
 - Aligning the testing effort with stakeholder goals and expectations
- Expand and sharpen your communication techniques and approaches – testers use them everyday!

Questions?



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