



# Conscious Communication

## Appreciation, Recognition and Acknowledgment

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We are a small group species. We are dependent upon others for our survival. Our emotional, mental and physical health are dependent upon our getting along and being recognized as a fellow human being. It is critical that we have that recognition and that we are welcomed and appreciated as a contributing member of our community. We need to be acknowledged for our efforts, to celebrate our accomplishments with others, to be appreciated for who we are. Without this, we die.

Although we usually think of evaluations as negative, compliments are also evaluations. As discussed previously, negative evaluations mask unmet wants. Positive evaluations (appreciations, compliments, acknowledgements, recognition) express wants that have been met.

When we give someone an appreciation, we are letting them know which of our needs they have met and how they have contributed to

our well-being. In this too, it is important to be specific about the behaviour that nurtured us. If we are not specific, the other person is left guessing or assuming what it was, and is less likely to be able to repeat it. They may think it was just a lucky chance that something they did made us happy with them.

Letting them know the specific behaviour that feeds us, and hearing from them about what feeds them, makes it much easier and more likely that we can come close to meeting each other's needs for appreciation, recognition and acknowledgement.

### Risk-taking, Growth and Awareness

Taking risks and facing fears are key elements of mental health. Self-confidence grows when we get through life's problems and difficult times. A refusal to take risks can leave us feeling unsafe, anxious and insecure, as we are not confident in our coping abilities.

Our goal is to develop the risk-taking muscles that lead to a sense of security. We need to exercise and strengthen these muscles. If we are always in comfort, they grow weak. Too much exertion, though, becomes stressful and detrimental. We want to build muscles, not tear them down.

Communicating consciously requires that we take risks. We need to take the risk of asking for what we want and need. We will have to stick our necks out and speak up. With practice, over time, we will become skillful.

Conscious communication requires that we work towards a heightened awareness of our environment, both internal and external. As we pay attention, we learn to enjoy the communicative possibilities in every moment.

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