



New Trends  
in Psychology

## Attitudes and Skills of the Counselor - the Field of Psychology

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**Abstract:** The counselor's personality represents the essential tool of the intervention, being the default model for managing problematic life situations. The counselor's values cannot be consciously expressed because they affect the self-evaluation process necessary for the "individuation" of the client. The theoretical-technical analysis and synthesis is done through the personality of the counselor who "builds" the client's reality. The counselor's personality is the essential framework element, the filter, and the integrative factor of the counselor's technical-theoretical ensemble. Attitude expresses a way of relating to certain affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects and implications. Empathy - one of the secrets of effective communication is the ability to put yourself in the situation of the person in front of you and understand his way of seeing things.

**Keywords:** counseling; attitude; skills; skills; attitudes; empathy; active listening; congruence; personality; behaviors

### 1. Introduction

- Representative concepts;
- The counselor's personality;
- Elements of axiology;
- Elements of epistemology.

Counseling involves the development of fundamental skills and abilities, without which the counseling process cannot lead to the effects outlined by the counseling

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objectives themselves. The counseling process involves a special relationship between the counselor and the counselees, based on responsibility, confidentiality, trust and mutual respect. Any counseling process must begin with the counselor assuming the responsibility of respecting a system of values and codes established by the specialized associations. Congruence implies that our entire personality is in perfect harmony with what we do and say at a certain moment. Paraphrasing - is the ability to reformulate what seems essential to us in the message. Its objective is to clarify aspects related to the subject or theme under discussion.

## **2. The Counselor's Personality**

The counselor's personality represents the essential tool of the intervention, being the default model for managing problematic life situations. The counselor's affective and cognitive management capacity is reflected by the capacity to accept his own experiences, by the positive attitude, by the capacity to engage in the relationship, to allow himself to be perceived by others as he is, to accept responsibility for his own behavior, to have realistic aspirations and to be aware of one's value system. The counselor's values cannot be consciously expressed because they affect the self-evaluation process necessary for the "individuation" of the client. The theoretical-technical analysis and synthesis is done through the personality of the counselor who "builds" the client's reality.

Person means the concrete human individual. Personality, however, is a theoretical construction developed by psychology, in order to understand and explain the ways of being and functioning that characterize the psychophysiological organism that we call the human person. The counselor's personality is the essential framework element, the filter, and the integrative factor of the counselor's technical-theoretical ensemble. The counselor's efficiency is distributed according to the following dimensions: the structure and dynamics of the personality and the method of reporting to the theoretical-technical corpus. The counselor's efficiency is the result of:

- The capacity for non-defensive involvement in the relationship.
- The counselor's flexibility in addressing the client's problem.
- The counselor's ability to make an adequate theoretical-technical synthesis.

In the situation when the counselor was trained in one of the fields of psychotherapy, he will primarily use the tools specific to that training. The tools available to him as a result of his own training will be considered effective, with the necessary adaptations to be used in the counseling field. Efficiency should not be understood as a movement that oscillates between theories and techniques. The effective counselor is the one who is open, relaxed and able to think and act technically according to the best solutions. In addition to the qualities of the counselor and the techniques possessed by him, the essential element of the counseling approach is the personality of the counselor understood as a tool that allows the development of the client's personality. The efficiency of the counseling process is especially supported by the counselor's attitude towards the client. Success is achieved to the extent that: the client is perceived as independent, capable of success and directing his life; the counselor perceives himself as non-dominant and altruistic. The counselor's personality is one of the essential elements of the framework as it constitutes a model for the client.

### **3. Elements of Axiology**

Axiology is the philosophical discipline whose objective is the study of moral values. The word axiology comes from the Greek: *axia* = value, *logos* = theory. The value is based on the social relationship, through the reporting and correspondence of objects or facts with the needs of the socio-cultural environment. That is why the axiological criteria are dynamic and determined by the evolution of the environment they support. The values serve the socio-cultural environment and the counseling framework, in this case, as points of reference in decision and action. At the generic level the values are equivalent: no set of values can be considered superior to another set of values. However, the counselor has his own axiological system that is expressed in the counseling process. The counseling process is effective in conditions where there is a certain degree of axiological assonance between the counselor and the client - optimal assonance between the axiological systems. The counselor's positions in relation to the axiological system are distributed along the repressive-expressive axis:

Axiological repression in order not to jeopardize the client's self-evaluative capacity: the counselor is axiologically neutral, he does not impose any value. The client's values are taken into account, while the counselor will not reveal his position in any situation;

→ The axiological expression, in order to counteract the client's deviations: the counselor explicitly indicates his values;

→ Axiological repression is impossible and the expression must be made aware: the exchange of values between counselor and client is implicit and driven by the content of the counseling approach, by the need to produce a change, including at the axiological level. The client will be supported in becoming aware of his values, to the extent that the counselor has managed to relate to his axiological system.

→ Axiological repression is impossible, but the influence produced by expression should not be deliberate: beyond the content of the counseling approach, the values of the counselor are expressed at the level of the framework in professional ethics, in the goals and methods of the process. Consequently, axiological neutrality is impossible, and the value system of the client will be influenced and modified in relation to that of the counselor.

The main value needed by the counselor is freedom, a value that allows creative and responsible choices. Customer acceptance is the premise of any change, development and optimization effort. The client's ability to accept, an essential element of the counseling approach, is based on a fair relationship between the counselor and his axiological system. The counselor respects the individual value of the client without conditioning him and leading him to another value system.

#### **4. Elements of Epistemology**

Epistemology is part of epistemology that studies the process of knowledge as it takes place within the sciences; the theory of scientific knowledge. The word epistemology is formed from the Greek episteme = science and logos = study, theory. The word "knowledge" is used to denote both an activity through which knowledge is born, as well as the results of this activity. In the first sense, the knowledge capacities of the mind and their functioning are considered, and in the second sense, ready-made knowledge, notions, judgments, theories are taken into account. Philosophers were interested both in the faculties and approaches that intervene in the production of knowledge, as well as in the analysis of the final results of these approaches. An epistemological perspective is useful in the analysis of the advisor's way of reporting to the theoretical-technical body. Epistemology, being the science of scientific knowledge, proposes the following questions:

→ How can we know reality?

→ What are the sources through which we have access to reality?

In the case of the counseling process in which we refer to the ways of knowing not the reality in general, but the reality of the client in particular, it is useful to refer to:

→ The principle of self-reference - any theory is an attempt to “build” the world, in which the dynamic of the knowing subject’s personality is expressed,

→ The principle of ignorance - knowledge always tends asymptotically towards the reality of the known object;

→ Uncertainty principle - several elements cannot be known simultaneously at the same level;

→ The principle of relativity - any theory and perspective is relative and falsifiable.

In the adventure of knowledge, the human being, the subject of knowledge, went through different stages of decentration and the gradual loss of the axis mundi status. Epistemic ruptures and paradigmatic shifts became common occurrences in theoretical advance. This fact posed the problem of the way in which the human individual “constructs” reality, since the objective reality can only be approximated, always remaining an important remainder. And this all the more, since the instrument of knowledge is our psyche itself, a situation in which any state of fact is transposed in the process of knowledge, in a psychic event. Psychism, the internal world of the individual, represents the source of any model of reality.

## **5. Counselor Attitudes**

We call attitude: “the way of being, of behaving, of manifesting one’s position, of asserting one’s point of view firmly, one’s position towards ....” Attitude expresses a way of relating to certain aspects and affective, cognitive and behavioral implications. Three fundamental groups of attitudes are distinguished in the character structure:

→ attitude towards oneself: modesty, pride, dignity, feeling of inferiority/superiority, guilt;

→ attitude towards others, towards society: humanism, patriotism;

→ attitude towards work.

The relationship between advisor and client is based on two fundamental assumptions:

1. "All people are special and valuable because they are unique" - the clients' awareness of the concept of uniqueness and the unconditional value of any person is facilitated.
2. "Each person is responsible for his own decisions" - people show their uniqueness and value through the decisions they make. One of the goals of counseling is to teach clients to make responsible decisions and accept the consequences of their actions.

The most important duties of the counselor are:

- Unconditional acceptance;
- Empathy;
- Congruence;
- Collaboration;
- Positive thinking;
- Responsibility.

**Unconditional acceptance** - is the attitude based on the following principles: the human being is valuable and positive by its essence, has the capacity or potential to make responsible choices, has the right to make decisions about one's personal life and to assume one's own life. Acceptance is the attitude of recognizing the dignity and personal value of individuals, with their strong or weak points, qualities or defects, positive or negative attitudes, constructive or sterile interests, thoughts, feelings or behaviors, without criticizing, judging, controlling and above all without conditioning the appreciation - "I will appreciate you, if ..."

Unconditional acceptance is the fundamental premise of the process of personal development and optimization of the person's functioning. The valorization of individuals should not be conditioned by the social group they belong to, race, sex, religion, level of school performance, personal values and attitudes, behaviors.

Unconditional acceptance is not equivalent to approving any attitude or any behavior, with neutrality or ignorance, with sympathy and tolerance. Accepting a person does not imply either approval or disapproval of what the person says or feels.

It is the acceptance of the way the person feels or believes differently from others. It is not indicated to use assessments like: “you shouldn’t feel that way”, “boys shouldn’t cry”, “girls never behave like that”. The risk of approval or disapproval is that the individual perceives his value only through the interpretations and evaluations made by other people, in the situation of approval or disapproval of his behaviors.

Acceptance does not mean having an attitude of neutrality or indifference towards the way a person thinks or especially feels: “It’s no problem”, “leave it, don’t worry anymore” are verbal forms of minimizing or ignoring the individual’s tensions. This attitude has the effect of invalidating the way in which each person perceives an event or a situation differently. Acceptance is a positive attitude, understanding the person and not a neutral one. Neutrality leads to the individual’s perception of indifference on the part of others.

Another misinterpretation of acceptance is sympathy. Sympathy is different from acceptance by the more intense emotional involvement of one individual towards another. Sympathy can also lead to discriminatory attitudes towards other individuals. It is rather the consequence of the feelings that a person feels towards another person (the teacher towards a student). Sympathy expresses an attitude of bias. In counseling, the perceptions and feelings of the counselee are less important than the feelings of the counselees.

Tolerance is another difficulty in developing unconditional acceptance. Being tolerant means accepting individual differences. Tolerance should not be manifested only on a general and declarative level - “I am tolerant towards a person with a different religious affiliation, but I do not understand and do not respect it”, “I am tolerant towards AIDS patients, but I do not want to have to deal with them”, “I am tolerant towards people with a different sexual orientation, but I still think that they are sick people”.

→ **Obstacles in the development of unconditional acceptance:**

- lack of information about the child’s and adolescent’s personality;
- personal emotional problems of the counselor teacher;
- projecting one’s own values, beliefs or feelings on students;
- prejudices or erroneous, incomplete information about a subject;
- the confusion between acceptance and approval, sympathy or neutrality;

- loss of respect for students;
- loss of self-respect;
- identifying the student with his own child, with his own person or with other people in the teacher's life

**Non-acceptance means:**

- to give advice, solutions: "Why don't you do that..."
- to evaluate, to blame: "Here you are definitely wrong..."
- interpret, analyze: "What you need is..."
- label "You're stupid because you did..."
- to command, to be directive: "I have to..."
- to agree, to praise: "You are 100% right."
- to moralize: "You had to do this and that..."
- asking questions like "Why did you do...?"
- to sympathize, to support the general way: "Everything will be fine..."
- to threaten, to warn: "If it happens again, then..."
- to avoid: "Let's forget this..."
- to condition: "I will appreciate you only if you get high marks..."

**Empathy** - one of the secrets of effective communication is the ability to put yourself in the situation of the person in front of you and understand his way of seeing things. Maybe the word empathy doesn't suggest anything to us, but we know that an ancient saying urges us to put ourselves in the shoes of the person next to us before commenting on their behavior or way of thinking. The wisdom stemming from this life experience - "put yourself in his shoes", encouraged tolerance long before the concept of communication appeared. The Anglo-Saxons and the Spanish also have a similar saying that teaches you why it is better to "walk in other people's shoes" before giving your opinion about your neighbor.

"Put yourself in his shoes" refers not only to the possible negative judgments we make of our peers, but also to the ability to understand their feelings and reactions. If a friend is suffering, a line like "I understand why pass", it shows that you care



and says more than “Everything will be fine”, although neither of you is certain that it will be. Instead of a stereotypical expression, the interlocutor expects you to perceive the problem he is facing as a fact that affects his life and show him that you know what he is going through.

Empathy does not mean identifying with the other, canceling your personality, but transposing yourself into his mind and soul to understand how he perceives things.

Many times the communication between us suffers because of the lack of empathy. We are used to not accepting another perspective on things. We criticize and do not give the person next to us the right to express his opinion because we perceive it as wrong from the start, precisely because it does not agree with ours. I could say that to empathize involves diminishing personal pride and a step forward towards better communication. On the other hand, you can't say “from tomorrow I start empathizing with everyone”. Training is difficult and frustrating because, despite a personal satisfaction (“what an understanding person I am”), you will want your friend to do the same. But how about saying straight to his face “empathize with me because I empathize with you”. Most of the time the answer will not be mutual and that makes us give up. When you communicate empathetically with someone, the communication is done on a deep level, beyond the semantic meaning of language.

Carl Rogers, who studied empathy for a long time, states: “to be empathetic means to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with all its emotional components as if you were the other person, but without losing the “if” condition. The author has in mind through the framework internal of another, the partner's psychology, as it emphasizes both the cognitive and the emotional elements of his psychology. The state of “as if” takes into account the fact that one's own identity and feelings are preserved.

Carl Rogers also adds to this definition, if that state of “as if” is lost, the state becomes identity, which is an extreme state of loss of one's own Self, bordering on pathology.

Through empathy, any person manages to transpose themselves ideatively, affectively and motivationally into the psychology of another, to partially identify with it, but especially emotionally to behave “as if” they were the other person, to play their social role, to enter in the skin of the character, without losing his own psychic individuality, without losing the “as if” condition. The possibility of transposition into the psychology of another allows any person to penetrate the

internal frame of reference of the partner, to better perceive his emotional state, to anticipate his reflections and the reasons for his behavior in an intuitive way, to communicate implicitly in favor of a better understanding of his psychology.

Empathy assumes two main purposes: a communication in itself and accommodation to the reality of the other as a guarantee in social practice. One empathizes either out of professional interest, or to obtain something from the other, to increase the number of acquaintances, to conquer someone, to be able to act on the other or simply as a way of knowing without excessive concern of sympathy.

The most expected goal of empathy is the prediction of behavior, as it is a technique of inserting the individual into society. The empathic activity is specific to each person, the partner's empathy levels mutually enhance each other. An empathic behavior of an individual in relation to the partner, stimulates in the latter an empathic behavior of similar intensity and both partners structure their feelings according to a mutual intuitive understanding. Empathy develops by acquiring verbal and non-verbal communication skills following some suggestions:

- the very rare use of closed questions that prevent communication: "Why did you do...?"
- the use of open questions: "Could you say more about that event?"
- active listening to the interlocutor;
- avoiding the counselee's moralizing;
- avoiding interruptions during the conversation: "My opinion is that..."
- avoiding labels of any kind: "You are a bit frivolous/distracted/superficial..."
- the use of constructive suggestions: "It will be better if you do..."
- avoiding sarcastic criticism: "You are ridiculous..."
- avoiding negative feedback: "Your result is unsatisfactory..."

**Ways to improve empathic communication:**

- providing short and clear answers;
- giving time to think before giving an answer;
- focusing on the messages sent by the counselee;
- the use of a suitable tone of voice;

- avoiding cliché answers: “Many people go through situations like these.”

The phenomenon of empathy manifests itself adaptively in the act of interpersonal communication, allowing a certain way of penetrating the “psychology” of the discussion partner, as a means of elaborating one’s own behavior model. Through empathy, we have the opportunity to better understand our partner, to intuit his thoughts and emotional feelings, to anticipate his behavior and even to act appropriately on it. In social relationships, emotions can influence behavior more or less. Their externalization can take the form of accentuated personality traits that can “label” a person as confident, boastful, etc. A special role in establishing good communication with these people is played by empathy - empathic ability as a function of communication.

**Congruence** - refers to the concordance between the counsellor’s behavior and his personal beliefs, emotions and values. It defines the authenticity of a person’s behavior. The counselor’s psycho-behavioral congruence is generated by the agreement between conviction, emotional experience and verbal and non-verbal expression. The lack of authenticity leads to the loss of the relationship of trust with the counselors. Congruence implies that our entire personality is in perfect harmony with what we do and say at a certain moment. Being congruent means having such a high degree of self-relation that what we convey influences others before we utter a word. In NLP (neuro-linguistic programming), congruence represents that state in which a person’s body language, words and actions are complementary, in agreement and moving in the same direction. When we are incongruent, we transmit through body language a series of cues, which are unconsciously decoded by the other person and the communication is carried out at low standards or, in the best case, these cues will distract and induce a state of confusion. The incongruity results when the mouth and the body do not speak the same language.

**Collaboration** - is the counselor’s ability to involve the person or group of people in personal development decisions. The relationship is one of respect and partnership, and not of transmitting information from “expert” to “novice”. The counselor’s role is to help the client find the most relevant solutions and be able to make responsible decisions. The counselor must not turn into a person who offers solutions for all problems, but must be a facilitator of the client’s personal development process, enabling him to identify his own solutions to the problems he faces.

**Positive thinking** - counseling philosophy is the definition of man as a positive being who can be helped to improve his less developed aspects. Counseling activities must be focused on developing the client's image and self-respect, constructive thoughts, and personal responsibility.

**Responsibility** - is a basic attitude of the counselor as a joint and assumed effort for permanent personal development. Theoretically, the counselor cannot get involved in the counseling process if he does not take responsibility for his attitudes and actions. Responsibility translates into compliance with the fundamental principles of counseling, by preventing the misuse of counseling knowledge and methods, by avoiding any action that interferes with the well-being of the counseled persons.

**Mutual respect.** This is ensured by the counselor through his professional status, through his competence and practical results, but also through his human attitude to relate as a human being to another human being. The humanist vision (A.Maslow, C.Rogers) is the most generous for outlining the philosophical-psychological context in which counseling can take place. Placing the counselor in a position of superiority or inferiority to the counselee distorts the relationship and affects the principle of mutual respect. From the counselee's point of view, choosing the counselor is the first proof of respect towards him. Mutual respect is permanently gained during the counseling process, both by the counselor and the counselee.

**The counselor's skills** - during the counseling process, certain fundamental skills (capabilities) are absolutely necessary that allow the activities to be carried out successfully and lead to the expected positive effects. The skills necessary for the counselor to carry out the counseling process are the following:

- active listening;
- observation;
- asking questions;
- providing feedback;
- providing information;
- paraphrasing;
- summarizing;
- the reflection.

**Active listening** - is the basic skill in counseling that supports good communication between counselor and client. Active listening is what encourages customers to speak openly and freely. Active listening communicates respect for what the

interlocutor thinks or feels and conveys through the non-verbal message that it is understood.

The factors that support the active listening process are:

- non-verbal communication (tone, voice intensity, facial expressions, gestures) should be appropriate to the content and emotional state of the client;
- visual contact with the client, but without making eye contact;
- ensuring that what the client wants to communicate has been correctly understood through formulas like “what you want to tell me is that...”
- listening to the client without being preoccupied with the answers that the counselor has to give;
- the counselor does not talk continuously, he must give the client the opportunity to speak and ask questions;
- listening must be genuine, the counselor must be sincerely interested in the problem addressed;
- listening must not be evaluative, value judgments are not made based on one’s own attitudes and beliefs, in terms of “good” or “bad”, “suitable” or “unsuitable”, “acceptable” or “unacceptable”, etc. ;
- labels are not used because of the desire to integrate the client into a certain category;
- listening should not focus only on the verbal message, most information is obtained from the non-verbal messages that the client sends: vegetative reactions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.

**Habits to be avoided in the process of active listening:**

- being inattentive, not following what the client says;
- superficial listening, when the counselor only seems to follow the discussion, without paying attention to what the client says;
- listen without understanding the message and do not ask for additional details;
- repeat in mind what the next question will be;
- interrupt the client in the middle of the sentence;
- feeling offended by the fact that the client has different values from those of the counselor;
- to react to subjects that contradict the counsellor’s own opinion.

**Observation** - observation skills allow a more real understanding of the message transmitted and the emotional state of the client. Observation has two important indicators:

- a) non-verbal behavior - mimicry, gestures, voice, vegetative changes;
- b) verbal behavior - content of messages.

Observing the discrepancy between the two components often provides additional information about the client or the situation in question. The difficulties in the observation process appear when one goes from simply observing some behaviors to personal interpretations of them in order to make inferences about the clients' personality. The effect of these wrong approaches is the loss of the relationship of trust with customers and its authenticity.

**Asking questions** - questioning is an invasive method and as a result, it must be used with caution in the counseling session. The counselor asks questions to help the client clarify personal feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and values

The questions can be: closed, explanatory, hypothetical and open questions.

a) Closed questions are those questions that generate answers in terms of "yes" or "no". These kinds of questions often lead to a breakdown in communication. However, there are also situations when we can use these questions to clarify concrete information. These questions have the advantage of focusing the discussion and obtaining accurate information about a certain aspect, for example: "do you live with your grandmother?", "do you work in shifts?"

b) Justificatory questions (why?) are questions that do not serve the counseling act, because they cause the client to identify causes or reasons and this is not the purpose of the counseling. These types of questions are associated with guilt. The question "why did you do this or why did you make this decision?" it is very often associated by the client as "something wrong". The questions "why?" they make the interrogated to be defensive and stop communicating, in situations where they are asked why they reacted that way, they feel obliged to find logical explanations or excuses for their behavior. It is recommended that instead of the question "why?" to use open questions such as . "could you describe the situation to me...?" This question focuses on present behavior and allows the client and the counselor to analyze what is happening in the present moment.

c) Hypothetical questions are useful for identifying the positive or negative consequences of some actions and for considering other action alternatives, for example: “how do you think you will be in five years?”, “what would your family coat of arms look like?”. These questions are useful at the beginning of topics such as self-esteem, conflict, decision-making. This kind of questions provides the client with a state of comfort by hypothetically approving the problem and not by specific focuses.

d) Open-ended questions are those questions that communicate to the client that he is being listened to and the counselor is interested in the information he transmits. This kind of questions helps the client to express his attitudes, values, feelings and options on some issues addressed. Therefore, it is recommended to use open questions as much as possible. Open questions facilitate the communication process by inviting you to describe the situation: “could you tell me more about ....?” “can you describe.....?”.

**Providing feed-back** - providing effective feed-back is a skill that supports communication between counselor and client.

## 6. Recommendations for Providing Feed-Back

a) The feedback will focus on the positive aspects, it must be constructive and not destructive. The goal is to support the client and not to evaluate or judge him.

b) The feedback must be specific and concrete, focused on a specific behavior and not on a general one. Vague expressions or indirect references to general behavior or the person do not help the client.

c) The feedback must be descriptive and not evaluative or critical. It is recommended to avoid the words “good” or “bad” and words derived from them because they do not say anything about the specific behavior they must develop.

d) Feedback must be provided for those behaviors and attitudes that must be changed.

e) Feedback must offer behavioral alternatives; if feedback is provided for those aspects that cannot be changed, the immediate consequence will be a state of conflict and emotional tension experienced by the client.

- f) Feedback must be provided immediately to reinforce the behavior and not after a period of time;
- g) The feedback must address the person's behavior and not the person in general.

**Providing information** - during counseling sessions, the counselor identifies the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the counselees. Depending on the accuracy of the information, the advisor provides new correct information. This information must be transmitted in a manner that leads to their understanding. When informational gaps are found, it is important that the counselor does not provide negative feedback to clients regarding these omissions or distortions, does not criticize the person who expressed them. This behavior would lead to the blocking of communication and thus the counselor no longer has the opportunity to encourage the attitude of curiosity and the need for knowledge on the part of the clients. It is not the evaluation process that is important in the counseling activity. Important is the framework and the interactive way of providing the necessary information, so that the advised person can make responsible decisions.

## **7. Recommendations Regarding the Provision of Information:**

- Using a common language with that of the client.
- Transmitting information that is correct.
- Exploring with the client some alternative themes, without offering them as the only solutions for his problem(s).
- The client must be helped to find solutions for himself that he can critically evaluate.
- The counselor analyzes and modifies together with the client the incorrect information he has, offering arguments that the client understands and accepts.

**Paraphrasing** - is the ability to reformulate what seems essential to us in the message. Its objective is to clarify aspects related to the subject or theme under discussion. Paraphrasing is done by using phrases that communicate to the client that the message has been understood, eg: "what you say refers to..." "in other words, you mean that..."

Paraphrasing is the ability to respond to the content and meaning of another person's verbal statement. By paraphrasing, the listener clarifies what has been said for accuracy and communicates to the other person that they are heard. With this



technique, you can check whether the assumptions you make about what you are hearing are consistent with what the other person intended to communicate to you. Your answer expresses interest in what is being said. Paraphrasing has to do, first of all, with the communicated content - facts, information, ideas, opinions, or circumstances that are described by the speaker. The answer may sound like this: "I heard you say that.. "As far as I understand you are saying that..." "You mean that..."

An example of paraphrasing might look like this:

WIFE: "Today, at the office, I participated in the most interesting workplace qualification course. The speaker presented 0 method of selecting applicants by personality tests, which method can be of inestimable value to me. It could drastically change the company's current hiring system."

HUSBAND: (using paraphrasing) ".If I understand correctly, this new testing method could change the current work rhythm in your office. That's how it is?"

Unlike active listening, paraphrasing only deals with the information conveyed and not with the feelings. The listener tries to understand the information and sends it back, sometimes in the form of a Question, for verification. Through this, you can show interest in what is shared with you, avoiding, at the same time, repeating the speaker's phrases like a parrot.

Clear interpretation of the message conveyed by words is important in all relationships, but especially in marriage. Many misunderstandings, which begin innocently, could be avoided if the listener would check what he understood. Given our years together, Harry and I could have saved ourselves a lot of bitterness if only someone had taught us this technique a long time ago. For example, Harry came into my office one day and asked me (as I understood it) if I intended to use the car. Confused, I answered: "How do you think I'm going to go to the store if I don't use the car?" In reality, he had asked me, "Whose car are we going to use?" (referring to a trip we planned to take the next day.) If I had used paraphrasing, the misunderstanding could have been avoided!

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