

Beware . . . The Butter

By Barry Rice

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A quiet evening, years ago, while reading the newspaper as my wife was preparing dinner, I overheard my 4-year old daughter ask, "Mommy, can I help?". "Sure, sweetie. Would you please put the butter on the table for Mommy?"

Moments later, the shriek of "EL-RIE!!!!!" (at her birth, my son could not articulate Ellen Marie, out came "El-Rie" –it stuck) brought my son and I into the kitchen in a flash.

My wife, holding her tummy, was bent in laughter. El-rie, with butter-covered knife in hand, confused look on her face, was standing beside where she had just 'painted' a pretty picture for Mommy all over the table – in butter – believing she had done exactly what asked. After all, hadn't Mommy asked, "Sweetie, would you please put the butter on the table for Mommy?"

When communicating, be careful what you ask for, be it personal or job-oriented. Certainly, communication with children is one thing. Communication with others requires awareness, an unassuming acceptance of their point of view, a non-finger pointing attitude and a certain willingness to be self-effacing.

Understanding the communication process is vital to achieving, and living, your definition of success. Ineffective communication can cause our loved ones, business associates, and friends to become frustrated, possibly offended, and conflict can occur – and, nothing is accomplished.

When communicating with others, it may be tempting to point the finger at others for not understanding your instructions and/or your viewpoint. The problem with this mind-set is

that it will not achieve your result of having the other person understand what you are attempting to convey. Taking responsibility for effective communication with others frees you to take the action steps to achieve the result(s) you are seeking.

In face-to-face communication with someone, don't make the mistake of assuming that you are making yourself understandable. When you concentrate, you will pick up on clues as to whether the other person understands you and your point of view. Do they display a confused look? Are they unusually silent? If you ask them if they have any questions, do they answer with an unsure "No"? These are all low key responses that the person may not be sure of what you just said. Don't hesitate to ask questions to determine their understanding.

When communicating with others, he/she who has the most 'give' and willingness to listen, and understand, will make their point clear.

Clearly, everyone will not hear, or understand you, in the same way. Some people may understand you better when they see the information communicated actually in action. Others when they hear the information, others when THEY take action on the communication or, still, others when they 'feel' the communication.

Take the time to understand your communicative skills. Maybe even ask someone close to you for an evaluation of your communication skills. Effective communication is a learned skill – and, you CAN learn it.

If you don't communicate effectively, you may well end up with butter on your table.

Barry Rice, speaker and consultant, is the author of Moving Forward Out Of The Fog, the self-paced, practical exercise-based course that guides you, step-by-step, to achieving, and living, YOUR definition of success. Subscribe to his challenging and inspiring newsletter at sunriseofopportunity@getresponse.com.

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