



Communication that Works by Catherine Steiner

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”
—1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV

Words Have Impact

Words are powerful. They can build trust, strengthen teams, and create unity—or they can destroy trust, weaken teams, and create division. At every level of an organization, the way we communicate shapes how others experience us and defines the culture where we work. Communication can make the difference between a struggling team and one where both people and performance flourish.

This month, we’re exploring what it means to communicate with **clarity, gratitude, and grace**—developing habits that reflect Christ and help our teams thrive. *Communication that works* isn’t just about what we say or how we say it—it’s also about how we listen, respond, and encourage others along the way.

Think about how often you communicate each day—through meetings, one-on-one conversations, emails, chats, and texts. Nearly everything that happens at work depends on communication. Yet it’s easy to take it for granted—to rush through messages or conversations without pausing to consider whether our words are clear, kind, and constructive.

Even the best leaders stumble in communication—it’s part of being human. But as women who lead with faith, we can grow in awareness and choose to communicate in ways that build trust and unity.

Here are some **common communication pitfalls** that can quietly erode relationships and team strength:

- **Assuming understanding instead of confirming it.** We believe others are aware of important information or that they know what we mean.
- **Listening to respond instead of to understand.** True listening communicates respect and genuine interest.



- **Skipping context.** When we forget to explain the “why,” people lose connection to the bigger picture.
- **Avoiding hard conversations.** Silence often creates more tension than honesty delivered with grace.
- **Neglecting gratitude.** Encouragement fuels motivation and reminds others that they matter.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” — Colossians 4:6

DISCUSS

1. How have you seen misunderstanding, avoidance, or lack of gratitude affect a team or relationship?
2. What one shift could help you communicate more intentionally and effectively this month?

Choose Life-Giving Communication

“The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.”
—Proverbs 18:21 NLT

This Proverb captures how powerful our words truly are—both spoken and written. Our words can **bring life** by supporting unity and flourishing on our teams, or they can **bring death** by sowing discouragement, confusion, and even fear. That may sound dramatic, but it’s true.

Think about the last time someone criticized you harshly or spoke in a curt, dismissive way. Maybe they failed to share information you needed or impinged on your role. How did that affect you? Now think of a time you may have done something similar to someone else—intentionally or not. What was the impact on the other person?



Those moments can feel like *a small death*—the loss of energy, joy, and focus that happens when we're distracted by hurt feelings or frustration. Poor or careless communication can stifle creativity, erode motivation, and sap confidence.

But the opposite is also true. A grace-filled word after a mistake, a simple expression of gratitude, a kind acknowledgment of effort—all of these breathe *life* back into a team. They renew motivation, spark creativity, and strengthen perseverance.

DISCUSS

3. What is one step you can take to consistently bring a spirit of grace into your communications?
4. Who might benefit from a grace-filled word from you today?

Pause, Pray, and Proceed with Purpose

“For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” —Luke 6:45b NIV

As we grow in communication that works, the goal isn't perfection—it's **intentionality**. Most communication challenges happen when we react rather than respond. Recognize when stress, pressure, disappointment, or discouragement are clouding your heart—those are sure signs it's time to pause and pray before you say or send another word.

When we slow down, check our motives, and seek God's wisdom, our words become instruments of peace and purpose rather than extensions of the very negativity we may be battling. A daily rhythm of thoughtful communication keeps us centered in grace and clarity, even when emotions run high or circumstances are tense.

Here's a simple strategy you can practice each day:

1. **Pause.** Before speaking, sending, or posting, stop for a moment. Breathe. Give the Holy Spirit space to guide your response.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” —Psalm 46:10 (NIV)



2. **Pray.** Ask God for wisdom. A silent prayer like *“Lord, help me speak with grace and truth”* can shift your heart instantly.
“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” —James 1:5 (NIV)
3. **Check Your Heart.** Reflect on what’s driving your reaction. Is it pride, fear, frustration, or care? Remember, our words reveal what’s in our hearts.
“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” —Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)
4. **Clarify the Goal.** Ask yourself: *What’s the positive outcome I want from this conversation?* Write it down and keep that goal in mind as you craft your response.
“Do everything in love.” —1 Corinthians 16:14 (NIV)
5. **Seek Perspective.** Step into the other person’s shoes. How might they receive what you’re about to say? What pressures or emotions could they be carrying?
“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” —Philippians 2:3 (NIV)
6. **Plan Your Words.** Write out what you need to communicate. Review it with your goal and tone in mind. Does it build up, or could it tear down?
“The heart of the wise makes their speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to their lips.”
—Proverbs 16:23 (NRSV)
7. **Proceed with Grace.** Deliver your message with confidence and compassion, trusting that God can work through your words to bring clarity, healing, and unity.
“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” —Colossians 4:6 (NIV)

Practicing these simple steps is an investment with tremendous return—time saved, relationships strengthened, and teams that function with greater peace and purpose.

*“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”* —Psalm 19:14



DISCUSS

5. Which of these steps do you most need to practice in your current season of work or leadership?
6. How could building this kind of rhythm change your communication patterns and your relationships?

Closing Encouragement

As leaders, we don't always get communication right—but every day gives us another opportunity to grow. When we pause, pray, and seek God's wisdom before we speak, He can turn even ordinary conversations into moments of grace and influence.

Remember: your words carry weight. They can build trust, restore confidence, and remind someone they are seen and valued. As you lead this month, may your communication reflect Christ—clear in purpose, rich in gratitude, and full of grace.

“Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” —Proverbs 16:24



Catherine Steiner is 4word Vice President of Programs. She is a speaker, writer, and leader in the faith and work movement. Catherine is passionate about helping women achieve more of their God-given potential with confidence by integrating faith into every area of life. Her diverse and circuitous career journey ranges from software consulting to project management, from marketing and sales and leadership training, to nonprofit leadership. She has been helping people integrate their faith and work since 2013.

Catherine is the author of *The Confidence Cornerstone: A Woman's Guide to Fearless Leadership*. She has contributed to several faith-and-work Bible studies, numerous YouVersion reading plans, and books from other authors including the iWork4Him and sheWorks4Him publications. Catherine holds a bachelor's degree in Christian Leadership. She is married to Mark. Together, they have five children and reside in Tulsa, OK.

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4word is a global community of Christian women in the workplace. Our mission is to help women in the workplace reach their God-given potential with confidence.

Why 4word?

At 4word, we know you want to reach your God-given potential so you can have a Kingdom impact on your workplace and the world. To do that, you need resources for professional and spiritual growth—and a community of like-minded women to cheer you on! The problem is your time is limited, and meaningful connections are hard to find. This can leave you feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and isolated on your life's journey.

We believe you shouldn't have to navigate work, life and faith on your own because God designed you for community. You are worthy to be surrounded by loving and supportive women who “get you.”

We understand you face unique challenges as a Christian woman in the workplace, which is why we create easy-access opportunities for leadership development, spiritual growth, and connections to influential women around the globe.

Our Simple Empowerment Plan:

- **Connect to a community:** We offer virtual and in-person Community Groups specifically designed for working women—and we also have special groups for executive women.
- **Access relevant content:** 4word's podcasts, weekly blogs, and our Community Group Discussion Guides are specifically geared to women in the workplace to help thrive on your journey.
- **Get matched with a mentor:** Through the 4word Mentor Program, we connect you with the right fit from our pool of over 200 highly experienced mentors for a transformational mentoring experience.
- **Join a 4word Collaboratory:** Accelerate your leadership growth through a **safe, guided program** where women like you—ambitious, faith-driven, and called—come together to grow as leaders and tackle real-world workplace challenges through the lens of Scripture and collaboration.
- **Executive cohorts and EW4C:** Women at the executive level have their own unique needs. 4word's executive cohorts and EW4C forums provide a curated space for these leaders to grow spiritually and professionally alongside like-minded peers.