

Blog, written for my Communication 2110 class at Weber State University – my students are required to blog weekly during the semester, so I decided to write a few things as well.

What is Communication?

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Perhaps this is a question that's been asked throughout the ages; yet, one that never quite seems to be answered. It is a science. It is a verb – to communicate. It is at best a mystery the human race has been attempting to discover (in various ways) since man's first hand gesture or grunt; the first audible sounds of any living creature; the first visual display for another to ponder its meaning.

In the field of Communication, we say that words do not hold meaning, people do. If words do not have meaning in and of themselves, then this concept of Communication becomes complex to the "Nth" degree. If each individual holds the meaning of this term Communication, then its definition is boundless, and the quest to understand it will be a life-long endeavor.

So, what is Communication?

A way in which an individual conveys a message to another, in light of the environment around them at the given time the message is being sent and/or received; and the degree to which that person has relationship with the other individual.

You see... Communication isn't just about a message! Communication is about understanding one another, in light of what we are attempting to transmit. And, the bottom line is that we do this without end from the moment we are born, until we take our last breath here on this earth. We are communicating beings. As I've said in my classes, "We can't not communicate."

A great example of this is found in the movie, *Castaway* (Twentieth Century Fox, 2000). Tom Hanks plays a mail delivery employee, who is flying home for the holidays. Unfortunately, the plane crashes into the sea and Tom is washed ashore on a deserted island. At the beginning of his time on the island, he speaks to himself, but then he discovers Wilson. Wilson is a ball; one of the packages that washed onto the shore along with him. At one point in the movie, Tom cuts his hand. Bloodied hand lands on Wilson, creating the appearance of a face – this is now Tom's companion.

Even on this deserted island, all alone, Tom can't help but communicate, because that is who he is (and who we are) – we are communicating beings, attempting to manage our way in a world with other communicating beings. Each one of us holding slightly different meaning for what communication should look like, and the ways in which we perform the act of communicating. Each one of us holding vastly different outlooks on this thing called life. Each one of us with experiences not like others, raised differently from our neighbors; yet, we must navigate this communication universe in such a way that we not only deliver the important messages of our lives, but understand and come to know those around us.

So, whether you are talking with your Wilson, your sibling, your significant other; a parent, teacher, or co-worker, we must all communicate, because that is who we are! Let's learn to do it well.