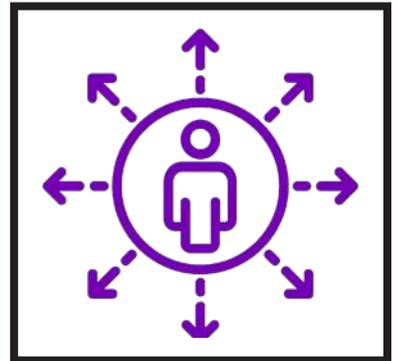




Creating Chances

We can make sure that people have a chance to communicate.
Lots of times.
In lots of places.
With many people.
Every day.



We can purposely create and share time, space and attention for a person to communicate. Take an interest in their favorite topics. Respond to their body language and take a turn in the conversation. Here are some strategies:

- **Wait!**—People often push through silence. We get uncomfortable and want to fill in the quiet space. If we wait, we provide a possible moment of expression.
- **Temp!**—Put desired objects visible but out of reach. Use clear, locked containers for desired objects. Tempt but don't tease.
- **Acknowledge**—Someone might communicate a message that you will not honor. Ex: "gimme \$1,000,000" Tell that person you understood them and respond—even if the answer is no. The reverse is also true. If someone communicates "no" when they need to do something (i.e. take medicine), respond and make sure they know you heard them before you insist.
- **Sabotage**—Put obstacles in the way and wait. Ex: get ready to go but keep the door locked. Wait for the person to engage with you.

- **Limit**—If a person requests something, just give a little bit—wait for them to request it again.
- **Allow**—Allowing things to go wrong can entice someone to communicate. Ex: no one put away the clean clothes. It's time to get dressed. Don't fix the problem. Just wait.
- **Touch**—Touching a person's arm or hand might encourage communication.
- **Routines**—Some people communicate more about familiar routines. Others when a routine is disrupted.
- **Expect**—Anticipate that someone will communicate. Lean in, smile and wait.
- **Choice**—Essential to life satisfaction. People are happier when they get to choose.
- **Wonder**—Ask open-ended questions aloud. "I wonder why that happened?"

Lots of little chances to communicate can, over time, have a big effect. Frequent and intentional chances can help someone take a risk. Some people have had a lifetime of not being understood or given choices. We have to counter that with lots of chances.