

Pass Right Pass Left

Introduction: Certain skills for good communication are certainly more important than others. One of the most important of these is the skill of listening. This activity will show the importance of listening and how difficult that is when you are not concentrating on what is being said because you are busy doing something else.

Materials: The Wright Family Story (included). One small item for each person in the group.

Time Frame: 15 minutes plus discussion time

Directions:

1. Have your entire group form a circle. The best format is to have them seated on the floor sitting with legs crossed. If this will not work with your group, you can have them in chairs or even standing in a circle.
2. Give each person in the circle a penny, button or some other small item that can be passed easily from hand to hand.
3. Tell the group that you are going to read them a story and every time they hear any word that sounds like right or left, they are to pass the object in their hand to the person on their right or left depending on what they heard.
4. Start reading the story slowly so that they have a chance to catch on to what you want them to do.
5. After a few passes stop the story and ask them how they are doing. Check to see that everyone has an object in their hand.
6. If your group is typical, some will have two or three items and other will not have any.
7. Have them redistribute the objects so that everyone has one again.
8. Continue to read the story, getting faster as you go.
9. Stop the story a couple of times to see how they are doing.

Debrief:

- What did you see happening during this activity?
- What made this activity difficult to accomplish?
- What impact did what other people do have on your ability to stay up with the story?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- How hard was it to listen and pass the objects at the same time?
- How much of the story can you remember?
- How seriously did everyone take the activity?
- What impact did the level of seriousness have on the activity?
- What can this activity tell us about communication?
- How hard were the people concentrating on either side of you?

- How does this level of concentration compare with what you do when someone is talking to you?
- Describe a situation you have had where someone was not really listening to you when you were telling them something?

Story:**Life with the Wright Family**

One day the Wright family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be left at home since there was not enough room in the Wright family car for all of them. Mr. Wright decided that Aunt Linda Wright would be the one left at home. Of course this made Aunt Linda Wright so mad that she left the house immediately yelling "It will be a right cold day before I return."

The Wright family now bundled up the children Tommy Wright, Susan Wright, Timmy Wright and Shelly Wright and got in the car and left. Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway someone had left a trash can in the street so they had to turn right around and stop the car and move the trash can so they could get going. Tommy took so long that they almost left him in the street. Once the Wright family got on the road, Mother Wright wondered if she had left the stove on. Father Wright told her not to worry, he had checked the stove and she had not left it on. As they turned right at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have left undone.

No need to worry now, they were off on a right fine vacation. When they arrived at the gas station, Father Wright put gas in the car and then discovered that he had left his wallet at home. So Timmy Wright ran home to get the money that was left behind. After Timmy had left, Susan Wright started to feel sick. She left the car saying that she had to throw up. This of course got Mother Wright's attention and she left the car in a hurry. Shelly Wright wanted to watch Susan Wright get sick, so she left the car too. Father Wright was left with Tommy Wright who was playing a game in the backseat.

With all of this going on Father Wright decided that this was not the right time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all of the family and left the gas station as quickly as he could. When he arrived home, he turned left into the driveway and said "I wish the Wright family had never left the house today!"

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