



The Power of Communication: Why Words Matter

Shelly A. Waggoner, MS, CEBS, SHRM-SCP

Sr. Vice President, Human Resources

October 8, 2024

What's your
WORD
for the
Year?





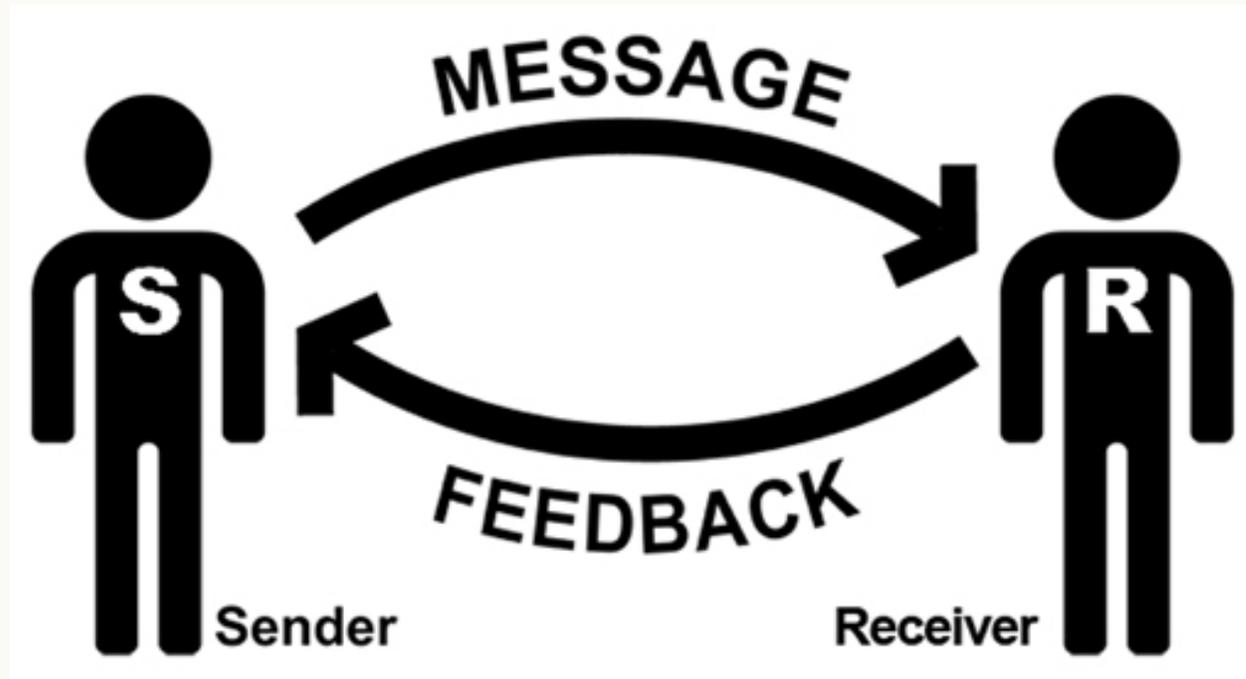
Key Objectives:

- Discuss the complexity of verbal & non-verbal communication
 - Uncover the emotional impact of our word choices
-
- Leverage words to build effective relationships
 - Learn best practices to enhance your communication style

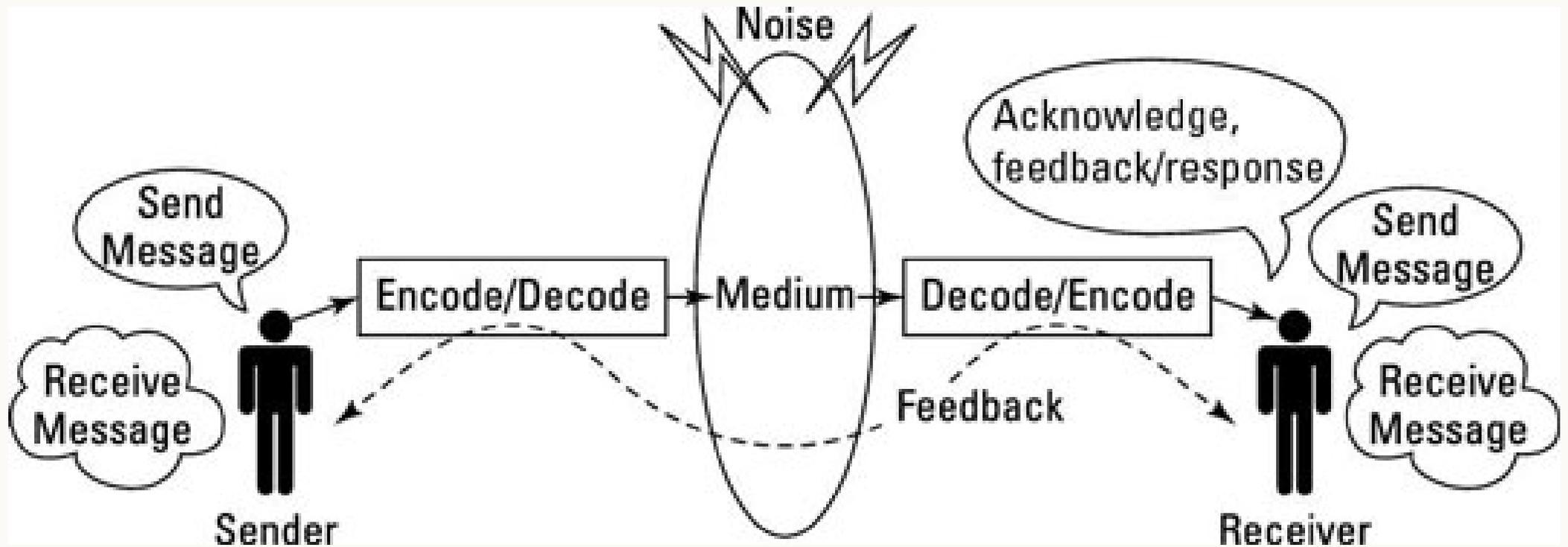
Communication is complex...

- Verbal communication involves using words and language to convey thoughts, ideas and emotions.
- Non-verbal communication includes a wide range of cues and signals we use to communicate without words.
- How we interpret the information is based on our own experiences, backgrounds, views, feelings on the topic.

The communication process



In reality...



Actions we take
Things we say

Body language

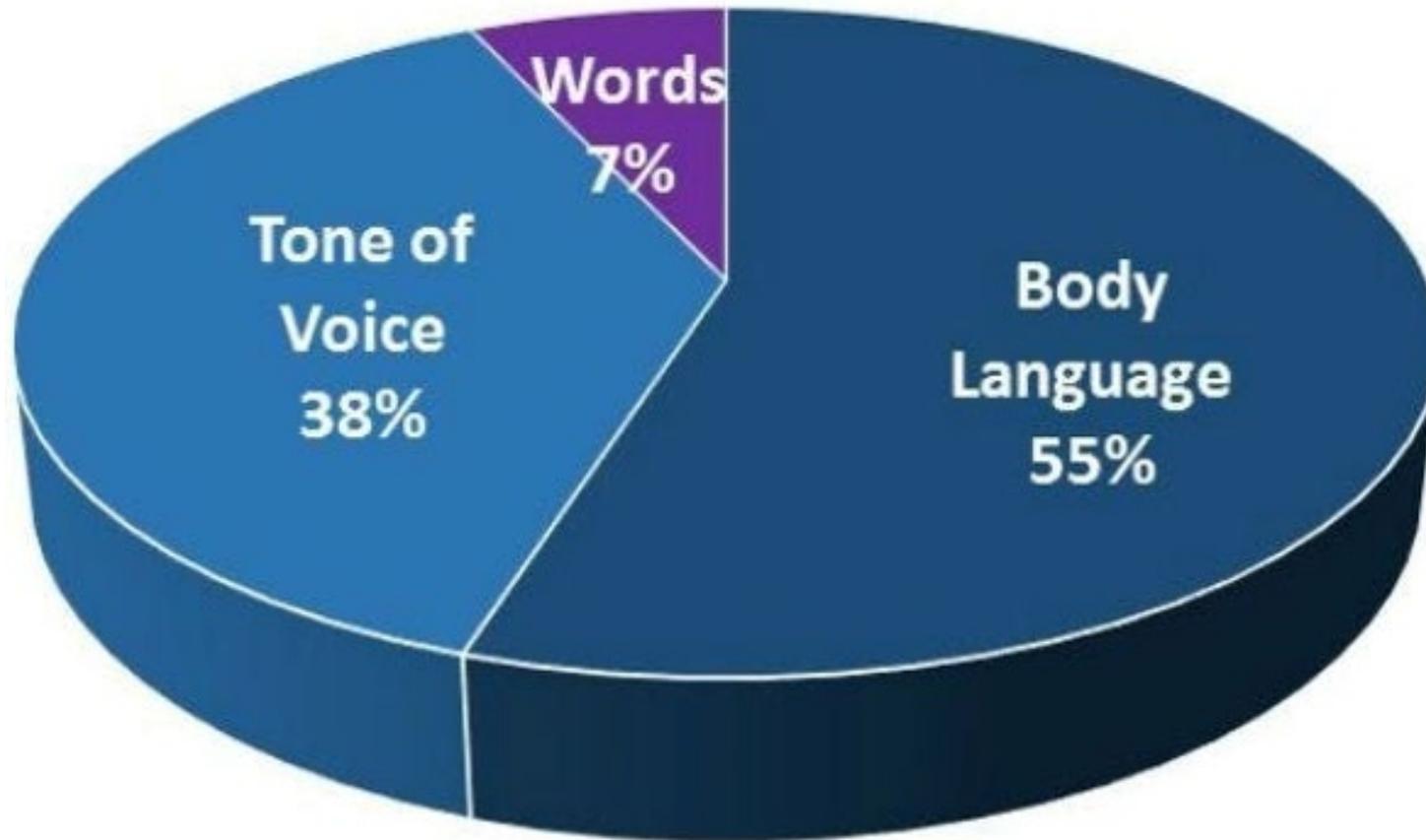
Thoughts
Feelings
Values

Beliefs
Past experience
Fears



Miscommunication

The hidden force that gives power to words.



Non-verbal communication



Your body language, facial expressions, posture and eye contact can enhance or reinforce your workplace conversations.

**“The most important thing
in communication is
hearing what isn’t said.”**

-Peter Drucker

Non-verbal cues that compliment your words...

- **Strong eye contact:** eye contact conveys interest, involvement and emotions.
- **Appropriate facial expressions:** You can show you're paying attention to your colleagues while listening by holding a slight smile, nodding occasionally and maintaining good eye contact.
- **A confident handshake**
- **Purposeful gestures:** Hand gestures punctuate the spoken word and add meaning.
- **Commanding posture and presence:** You convey messages by your sitting posture, standing up tall and straight to send a message of self-assurance, authority and energy.





What is the emotional impact of words in Communication?

**Words have a
profound
impact on our
brains.**



Words can trigger emotions.

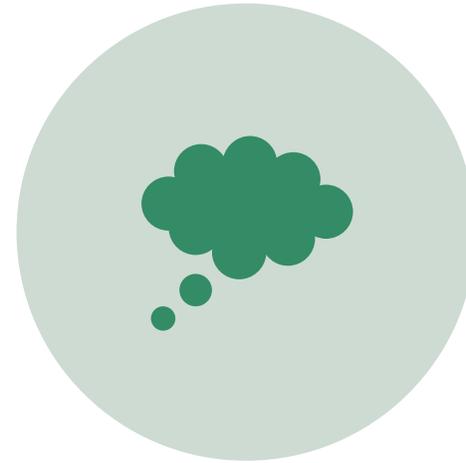
**STICKS AND STONES
MAY BREAK MY
BONES, BUT WORDS
WILL NEVER HURT ME.**

Proverb

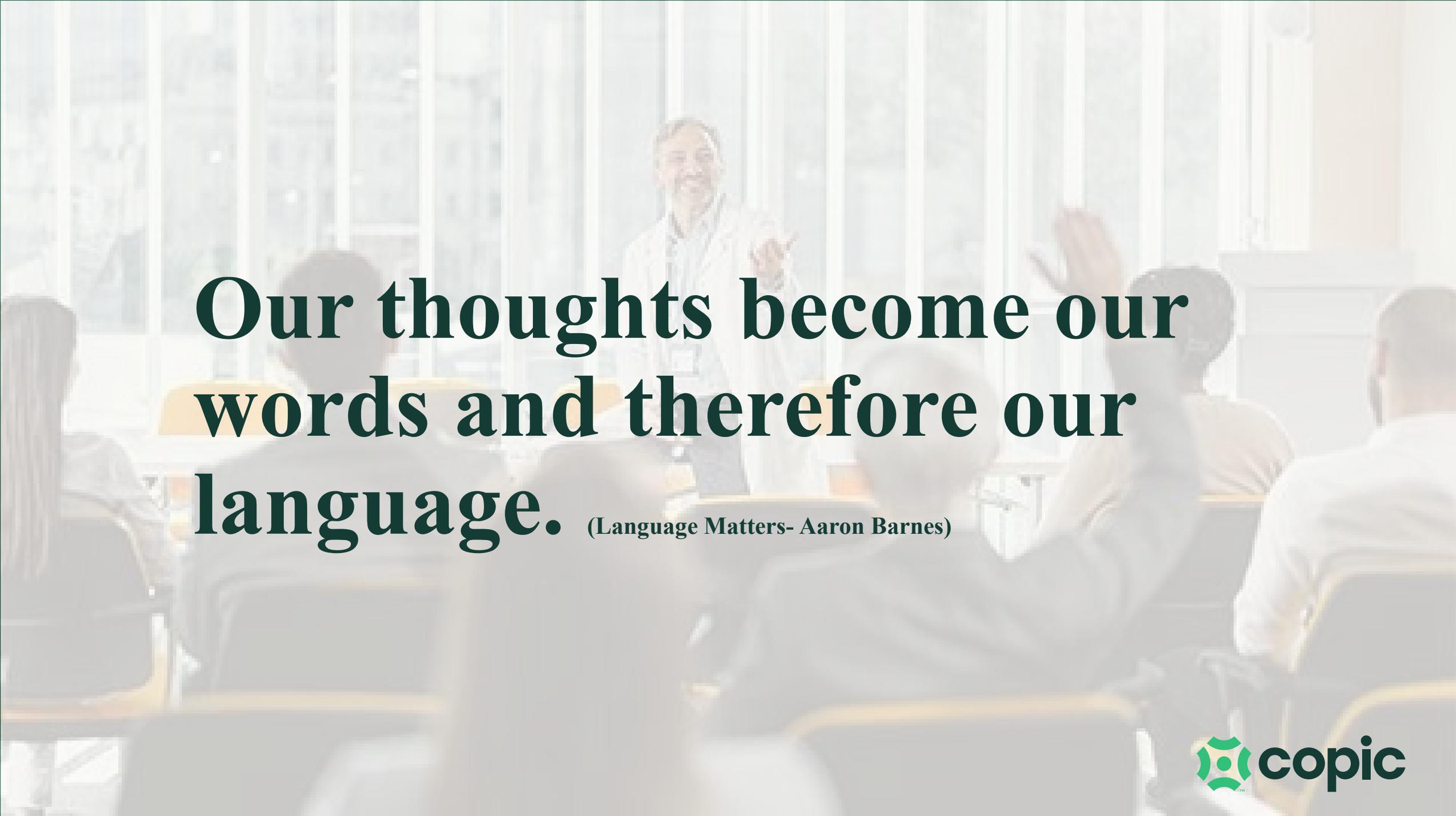
It starts with our thoughts.



NEGATIVE THOUGHTS INDUCE
STRESS AND ANXIETY



POSITIVE THOUGHTS CAN LEAD
TO BETTER PSYCHOLOGICAL
AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



**Our thoughts become our
words and therefore our
language.** (Language Matters- Aaron Barnes)

Words help express our feelings.

By choosing specific words,

- We can share our emotions.
- We can share our thoughts and experiences.
- We can inspire and motivate others.

Words provide clarity and precision.

- Be specific
- Provide context
- Tailor your message
- Repeat, rephrase and summarize your message
- Always ask questions



Coca-Cola

"Small Coffee"
5\$

"Small Coffee, please."
3\$

"Hello, one small coffee
please."
1.75 \$



Words can influence and persuade.





Coverage ▾

Services & Programs ▾

Protecting the Humans of Healthcare

Coverage that's more than medical liability insurance.

Get a Quote



See The
DIFFERENCE



**“choose your words wisely,
because they will influence
your happiness, and your
relationships.”**

- Andrew Newberg,
Words Can Change your Brain**



**How do you leverage
words to build effective
relationships?**





Listen

The biggest
communication problem
is we do not listen to
understand.
We listen to reply.

Leverage words to build relationships

- HUMANIZE the relationship!
- Take the time to ask about something important to the person outside of the workplace
- Ask relevant questions in follow-up to what you hear; Be curious!

Leverage words to build relationships

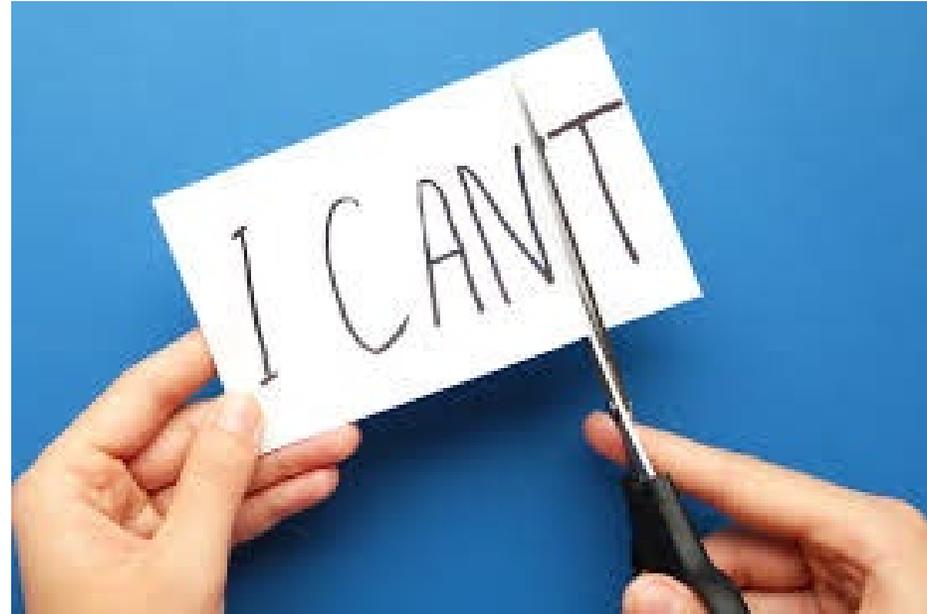
- Show appreciation for others by praising their work, and giving them credit
- Be authentic; Authenticity builds trust and makes your interactions more meaningful
- Share personal stories- this creates a sense of connection and relatability

Leverage words to build relationships

- Communicate with common words as it proves to be more effective than using large words
- Follow up; Check in on previous conversations- this shows you care and are invested in the relationship.

Avoid negative language

- “That’s not my job.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “You didn’t understand.”
- “We can’t do that.”
- “You should have...”
- “This is a problem.”
- “You failed to...”



Incorporate positive language

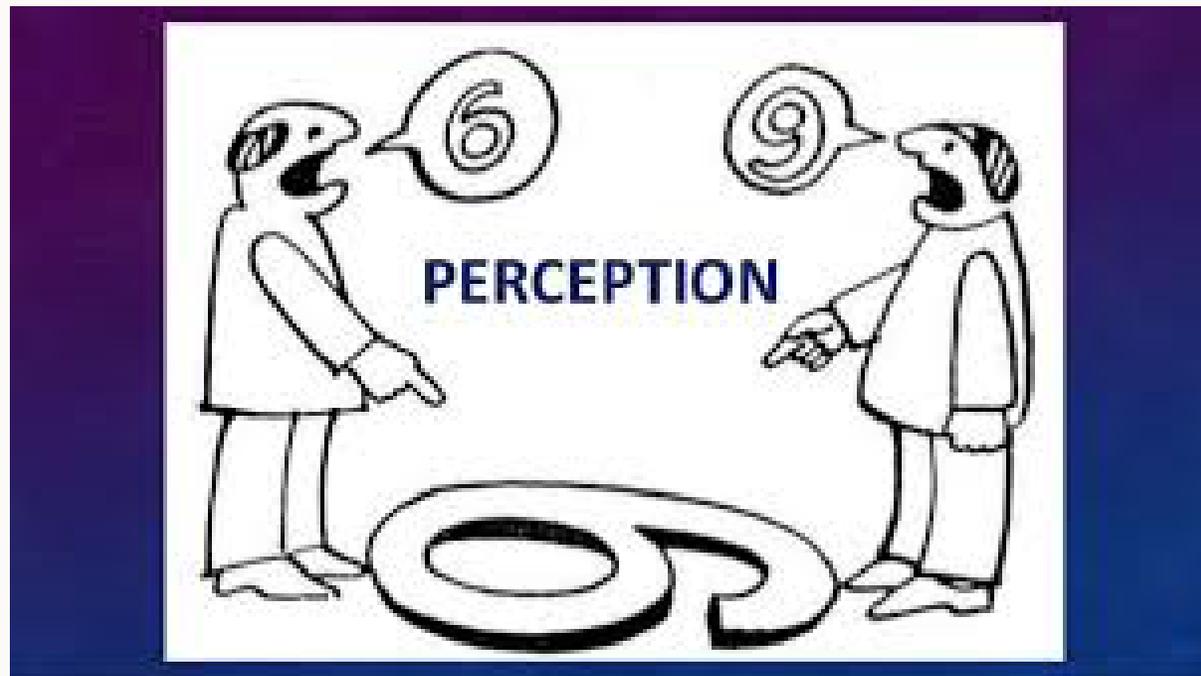


- “I appreciate your input and ideas.”
- “Let’s work together to find a solution.”
- “Thank you for your help. It made a big difference.”
- “I believe in your ability to handle this task.”
- “Your contributions are highly valued.”
- “Let’s build on this success and keep moving forward.”
- “I’m confident we can achieve our goals.”

Be clear & intentional with your words...

The way we frame our words can shape perception.

“It is a challenge vs. It is a problem”



ACTIVATION WORDS

Cooperate	Awaken	Gracious	Accomplish
Collaborate	Invigorate	Courteous	Meaning
Teamwork	Launch	Disciplined	Fulfillment
Trust	Unleash	Courageous	Overcome
Idea	Ambition	Awesome	Prevail
Spark	Stamina	Triumphant	Enterprising
Insight	Vitality	Flexible	Attractive
Passion	Win	Adaptable	Vital
Achieve	Discover	Determined	Dynamic
Share	Compassion	Grow	Fearless
Fun	Alert	Develop	Passionate
Enjoyment	Endurance	Freedom	Conquer
Power	Love	Zest	Flourish
Spirit	Victory	Enthusiastic	Prosper
Revive	Hero	Grateful	Benefit
Refresh	Legacy	Smart	Tough
Create	Respect	Positivity	Accomplish
Rally	Diligence	Impact	Success

Research Citations:

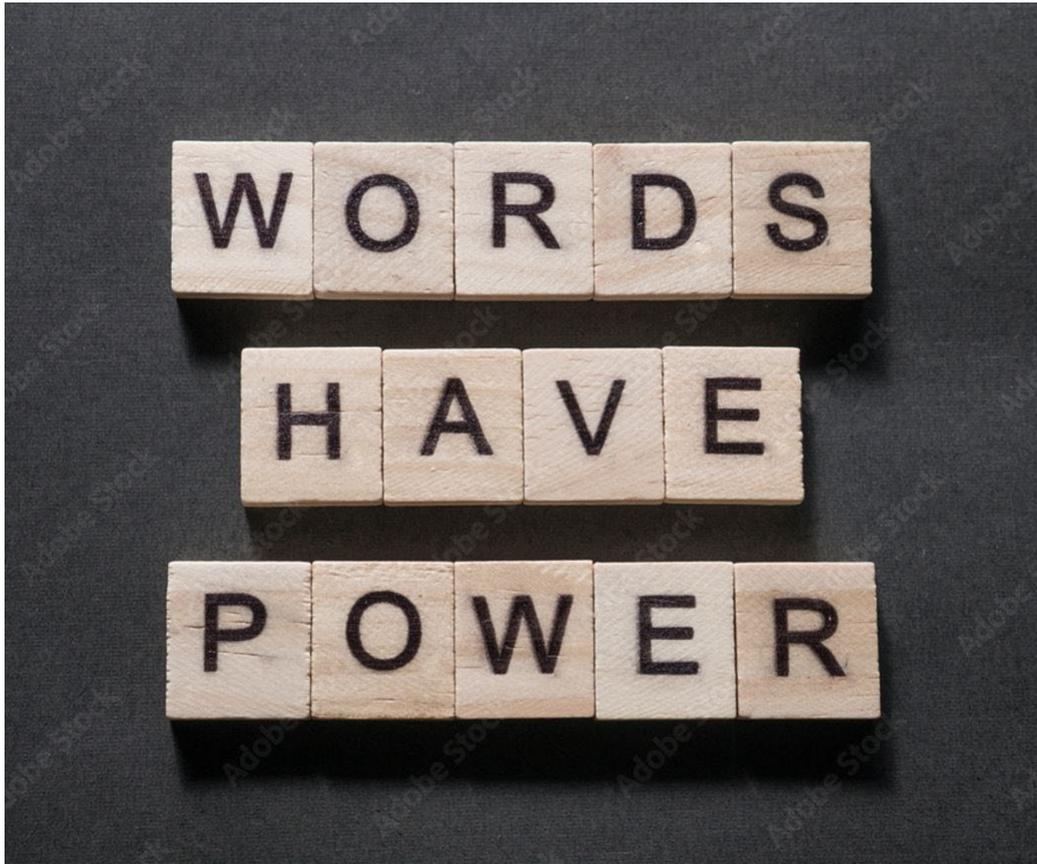
Bargh, John A., Mark Chen, and Lara Burrows. "Automaticity of Social Behavior: Direct Effects of Trait Construct and Stereotype Activation on Action." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71, no. 2 (1996): 230-44. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.71.2.230.

Best practices to enhance your communication

- 1. Be clear and concise. Simple always wins.
- 2. Know your audience. Tailor your language.
- 3. Use powerful and precise words. Strive for impact.
- 4. Enhance your vocabulary. Subscribe to the word of the day.
- 5. Read, read, read. Notice words and make a mental note.
- 6. Seek feedback. Commit to one change at a time.

Best practices to enhance your communication

- Great communicators use positive language.
- Great communicators show energy and passion in what they say. Tone is key.
- Great communicators express themselves with humility, showing empathy and understanding.
- Great communicators listen to understand.



“Words matter and the right words matter most of all. In the end, they’re all that remain of us.”

-John Birmingham

Questions?
Thank you!

swaggoner@copic.com