EPISODE 104: DEALING WITH CONFLICTS BEFORE THEY BECOME CONFLICTS

1. CULTIVATE A POSITIVE COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

- Many conflicts are the result of small offenses you might be unaware of.
- Every attempt at communication takes place within a climate. Poor communication climate ruins your ability to connect.
- The most important thing about any conflict is what you do *before* the conflict. That determines the scale, the intensity, how fast it will accelerate, etc.
- What some call kindness, or courtesy, or encouragement, we call "cloud clearing."

2. WATCH FOR NON-VERBAL SIGNALS

- Many people are uncomfortable expressing anger directly.
- Daniel Goleman, in *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ* p. 96-97. "People's emotions are rarely put into words; far more often they are expressed through other cues. Just as the mode of the rational mind is words, the mode of the emotions is nonverbal."
- Before words are spoken, the body might be sending a message: crossed arms, slumping in the chair, unwilling to make or sustain eye contact.
- The most dishonest part of the body: the face—"put on a good face." The most honest part: the feet.

3. LISTEN TO THE SILENCE

- "The calm before the storm."
- Watch for abruptness, being "short," turning a cold shoulder.

4. ASK ABOUT POTENTIAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

- Anticipate potential misunderstandings. Don't wait to be confronted, ask.
- Be tactful. Don't overdo this or you can be annoying.

5. APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE

- We all offend others.
- Do you care?
- Awareness + initiative = caring.

Sources mentioned in this episode:

Communication Guys Episode 30: "Never Rain on Your Own Parade: Understanding Communication Climates"

[Communication Guys Episodes 37-38: "What Every Body is Saying" interview with Joe Navarro](#)

[Communication Guys Podcast Episodes 76-77: "Crucial Conversations" interview with Justin Hale](#)

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