

OPINION

It's All About Communication

by Dr. Todd Frobish



Want a job? Want to be successful in that job? Promoted? Given regular salary advancements? Be recruited by national headhunters working for Fortune 500 corporations?

Well, it won't happen solely because of your expertise or experience. It also won't happen because of which school you went to, what your major was, how high your grades were, with whom you trained, and not even who you know. It will happen because of your ability to communicate. If you think anything else, you're fooling yourself. Communication is the key to succeeding in the job market. Are you ready? Here are four areas you may find deserve extra attention.

First, how are your interpersonal communication skills? Listening, for example, is essential to building stable relationships at the workplace and beyond, and I'm sure you would agree. In fact, good listeners are trusted more, seen as more responsible, and even perceived as more attractive. But do you listen effectively, or just think you do? Most people, due to diminishing attention spans and a lack of effort, listen very poorly, remembering, at best, only half of what they hear immediately after hearing it. Test yourself sometime, and see for yourself.

Here's another quick quiz. What comes first to your mind when I use the term "communication?" If two people talking to each other is it, then you're right on-target with most people. While such verbal discussions are certainly important, we place way too much emphasis on this one activity. Did you know that at least ninety percent of our messages are not verbal, but nonverbal? Why, then, do we virtually ignore the subject? When, in fact, was the last time you personally reviewed your use of eye contact, gestures, body posture, gait, clothing, interpersonal space, and so on? Ever been talking to someone and he or she suddenly became defensive and you didn't know why? Perhaps you've done something nonverbally. In fact, count on it! Nonverbal messages, intended or not, are very powerful.

How about this: Do you actively seek out opportunities to work in groups or teams? Or, do you avoid group work because you think it's a waste of time? Think it is better to work alone than in teams because you'll end up doing all of the work or be held accountable for the incompetence of others? You're not alone. But survey after survey shows the exact opposite: the great majority of teams works quite efficiently, and, in general, the groups are more productive when those in a team work toward common goals.

Finally, how competent are you when it comes to communication technology? Can you create a professional-looking PowerPoint presentation? Most people can't. The typical PowerPoint slideshow unfortunately includes cheap clipart graphics and sound effects, loads of complete sentences and even full paragraphs worth of written material, and a total lack of comprehension that the technology is there to supplement the

speaker and not the other way around. What do you know about Podcasting? Web design? Video conferencing? Such knowledge and technical skills could really set you apart from the crowd!

So, do you have the right skills to move forward into your careers? Strong interpersonal skills? Nonverbally competent? Willing to work in groups? Technologically adept? These and more will be required of you if you wish to succeed. If you want to reap the benefits the future has to offer, don't stop with your basic public speaking course. Take all the communication courses you can, and pay attention even to the little things! After all, it's all about communication.

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Where Will the Next Earthquake Hit?

by Brensha Williams

With major earthquakes occurring in places such as Haiti, Chile, Indonesia, and Turkey, is another major earthquake due to hit the U.S? The close proximity of the catastrophic events in Haiti and Chile has led researchers to believe we are next. Scientists warned for years that Haiti was at risk for a major earthquake, and it happened. Scientists predicted Chile was getting hit, and it did. According to National Geographic News, California is next. Dozens of earthquakes have hit California since the beginning of the year, sparking controversy as to whether a major disaster will occur.

A new report revealed that by 2037, California will almost certainly be impacted by a major earthquake. Data revealed a 99.7% chance that a 6.7 magnitude quake or greater will strike. Scientists have successfully been able to forecast large quakes caused by seismic gaps. Seismic gaps are active faults where no earthquake has occurred for a significant amount of time. The San Andreas is the boundary between the Pacific plate and North American Plate. It runs a lengthy 810 miles through California and Mexico. According to a geophysicist with the U.S.

Geological Survey, a shift in these plates will result in a major earthquake in Southern California.

Despite these warnings, it seems many people have not taken heed to these predictions. Virginia Salvador, a senior biology major at Fayetteville State, lived in California for 22 years before moving to Fayetteville. She plans to move back to California after she graduates, despite the warnings. "We're not going to leave. I live on the San Andreas Fault, about an hour away from the ocean. We're not going anywhere," said Salvador.

The largest earthquake in California occurred on the San Andreas Fault in 1857. In 1906, one of the most devastating earthquakes occurred in San Francisco, California, causing a lengthy rupture, and displacing the San Andreas Fault. Because of this seismic gap, this is the primary factor in the validity of claims suggesting a major earthquake is bound to happen soon.

Although no catastrophic earthquakes have happened in the history of North Carolina, it is still possible. According

to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), possible earthquake danger zones in the southeastern region of the U.S. could cause one of the highest economic and natural disaster losses due to the lack of preparation. "I would feel scared, shocked, and would not know what to do. I have never experienced an earthquake before. I would feel better prepared if I knew what to do in a situation like this," said sophomore biology major Appiffany Joiner.

Since it is impossible to predict exactly when an earthquake will occur, it is crucial to be prepared if an event should happen. FEMA advises to check for hazards in the home, ensuring that breakable items such as glasses and dishes are stored in cabinets with latches. Second, identify a safe place. Stay away from windows, mirrors, and bookcases and find a sturdy piece of furniture such as a heavy table or desk to take cover. Next, have supplies on hand such as a flashlight, first aid kit, food, and water. These safety precautions will help tremendously if such an event strikes at any given moment.