The ABC of communication skills: Expressing wishes

Sharing your wishes with others promotes your well-being and also serves to maintain and/or improve a relationship at the same time. Therefore, it makes sense to compromise and to be able to put aside some of your own needs to some extent. However, it is better to share your feelings right away if something is lacking or if anything is troubling you. If you suppress your needs for too long, you might "explode" at some point.

Here are some tips on how to communicate your wants and needs:

Before the conversation:

- Make yourself aware of how you feel about the current situation (anger, uncertainty, happiness, etc.).
- Think about the specific event that triggered this feeling (e.g.: your friend blew you out although you were supposed to be going to the student council party together).
- Give yourself positive instructions (e.g.: "I have a right to express my feelings.").

During the conversation:

- Use "I" messages and address your feelings directly, such as: "I'm angry,...!" or "I'm happy,...!".
- Refer to the specific event that triggered your feelings.
- Avoid generalizations such as: "You did it again...!" or "You're always...!".
- Remember that you can only describe things from your own perspective.
- Also try to understand the other person's feelings. Ask if you don't understand something.
- If they come around to your point of view, tell them that you are pleased.
- Express your wishes and needs about how the other person should behave toward you in a particular situation in future, such as: "I would be pleased if...!"

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After the conversation:

- Reward yourself for every single feeling you have expressed. The achievement is not that you have fulfilled all your demands, but instead that you have expressed your feelings and wishes.

- Remember that people often feel different things. Agreeing on how to feel should not be the aim of a conversation. However, you can both communicate how you want to deal with these different feelings.