Social Science Example of an Interpersonal Communication Experiment Report Paper

Concept Identified: Supportiveness

Concept defined: Supportiveness is validating a person’s right to think or behave in a particular way.

Description of the circumstance: On Monday, I took my car into the insurance claims office to have it examined by the adjuster. It was about 110 degrees outside and when the adjuster came out he appeared to have a chip on his shoulder. In his first couple of minutes of communication with me, he was very disagreeable. I could feel myself getting angry and decided that this might be a good time to try a new communication skill - Supportiveness.

Example of how the skill was used: I was supportive and said to the adjuster, "I’ll bet an adjuster’s job is pretty hard. Almost everyone you encounter is probably upset because their car is damaged, and somehow their anger carries over into their conversations with you. It’s not your fault they have the problem."

Describe the perceived effect: He stopped his grumbling and said, "Boy, are you right; I’m not the one that caused the damage to their car. I’m here to help them. I like my job, but some days you just get a string of unreasonable people." At that point, his whole nonverbal communication changed. His tense shoulders and aggressive movements seemed to disappear.

Analysis of the reason the skill resulted in the effect: I believe that the adjuster needed someone to understand and reinforce his right to feel as he did. When that happened, it was no longer necessary to be angry and hostile. My insight is that supportiveness enhances a person’s self worth and when that occurs the person becomes less defensive. Remember that performing these experiments will result in your being more aware of your communication skills, and this will make you a more effective communicator.