

BASED ON 20 YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL COACHING EXPERIENCE

How to Communicate Effectively with Seniors



PRESTON NI
COMMUNICATION COACHING

Also by Preston C. Ni

How to Communicate Effectively and Handle Difficult People, 2nd Edition

Communication Success with Four Personality Types

How to Successfully Handle Passive-Aggressive People

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Introduction

We live in a society where the post-World War II Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946-1964) is reaching their senior years in ever-growing numbers, and representing an increasingly larger segment of the population. Higher standards of living and medical advancements are extending life expectancies in many countries to well above the age of eighty.

Caring for, and having successful relationships with older adults often require unique communication skills and strategies. This reference guide provides highly practical tools on how to communicate effectively with seniors, including those who may be difficult to deal with. With thoughtful understanding, effective communication, persuasive motivation, and savvy conflict resolution, one can maximize the possibility of gaining cooperation, and establishing positive relationships with older adults. This reference guide will show you the steps for successful communication with seniors.

The Three Stages of Older Adulthood

Based on the writings of several authors, older adulthood can be categorized in three stages:

The Young-Old (age 65-74)

The Old-Old (age 75-84)

The Oldest-Old (age 85+)

These three stages of older adulthood can be classified either by age, as indicated above, or by capability:

The Young-Old (physically, cognitively, and socially active)

The Old-Old (physically and cognitively declining, social circles narrowing due to spouse and/or friends' passing)

The Oldest-Old (physically and cognitively dependent, socially isolated)

Of course, the experience of each older adult is unique and not necessarily conforming to the categories identified above. As an older adult transitions from one stage to the next, her or his wants, needs and priorities will often change, necessitating different communication skills and strategies for a successful relationship.

What Older Adults Want and Need

Most older adults desire various degrees of life satisfaction based on the following four types of needs:

Ni's Four Dimensions of Older Adult Needs*

1. Independence

Primary Basis - Physical and Mental

Research indicates that having a sense of internal locus of control, that is, the sense that one is in charge of one's own life, is an important facet of happiness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. For many seniors, there may be a strong desire to stay independent, and resist change and assistance. It's important to note that the degree of independence an older adult desires may decrease as the senior transitions from the more active young-old and old-old phases to the less active oldest-old phase. As a senior experiences diminishing mobility and cognitive ability, the desire for control may correspondingly decrease.

There's more to this excerpt!

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