

Developing Soft Skills and Personality
Prof. T. Ravichandran
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Lecture – 23
Telephone Communication: Advanced Telephone Skills

Hello everyone, welcome back to NPTEL MOOC course from IIT, Kanpur on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I am Ravichandran from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Kanpur. I have been giving this course now for the past 4 weeks. In this week, we particularly focus on communication and in the past 2 lectures, we started discussing about skills related to telephone and in this lecture in particular I would like to go for some advanced telephone skills and before I start, I would like to give a brief recapturing of what we did in the previous one.

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Highlights

Highlights of the Last Lecture

- Various aspects of telephone communication
- The calls you make, and the way you make them, tells who you are!
- The calls you avoid, and the way you avoid them, determines who you are!
- The people you want to talk, and the way you talk to them, tells who you are!
- Phone calls are important aspect of human communication: You can make or mar it!
- Different from oral: face to face communication
- Keep a pen and paper: Don't miss important point, number*
- Smile, your voice will be different when you do it!*
- Be patient; don't rush*
- Make the other person speak; don't interrupt*
- Never lose your temper*
- Don't eat or chew or munch*
- Stop reading, typing*
- Verbal encouragement:**
 - I see, tell me more, go on . . .*

In the previous lecture I actually discussed with you about the various aspects of telephone communication. So, I was generally looking at the communication aspect as if when we used telephone particularly, I was trying to look at telephone as a kind of paradoxical equipment that is used in communication, but I was also trying to highlight the fact to you that when you use telephone it also tells the kind of person that you are. So, the calls you make and the way you make them tells who you are, the calls you avoid and the way you avoid them determines who you are, the people you want to talk and the

way you talk to them tells also so much about you. So, it is actually telling, determining, explaining, enumerating about your personality. So, you have pay great attention to this device.

Phone calls today have become very important aspects of human communication. So, you can make it or mark it and I also highlighted the fact that it is very different from oral communication that is face to face communication. In face to face communication, you see the person in front of you. So, you can modulate your communication, but in this case you cannot see the other person, so that makes it little bit complicated in order to make it simple just keep a pen and paper do not miss important point note down the numbers particularly, if somebody is giving you a number that you should call its important you note it otherwise, you will forget it.

Smile and use other cues which will indicate that you are very warm and the other person can actually feel it and be patient even if the other person is slightly trying to prolong it do not rush, do not try to finish it in a hurry, be a good listener, be an active listener make the other person speak and do not interrupt never lose your temper particularly, on phone because it can cause huge damage you do not know how the other person would react.

And if the phone call comes when you are eating or you are chewing something or munching. So, stop it or do not do it when you are making a call even if it comes when you are reading, stop reading even if you are busy with a computer typing something when it comes do not pay partial attention to the phone call, stop typing for the time being and then pay full attention to it. So, that the communication remains effective and when you are in communication with the person use some verbal encouragement because the other person could not see you actually in front of him or her. So, you can use some verbal encouragements like I see tell me more go on. So, these cues will actually make the person feel that you are there and then you are listening very actively to the person's conversation.

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Interesting Features of Telephone Communication	
<p>Most commonly used; and most commonly misused form of communication! Often the receiver's response is taken for granted. Mostly for the reason that both the speakers cannot see each other. This is challenging because people presume so many things . A simple example: Let's meet at 7 tomorrow. Where? In the park, during my walk. <u>Effectiveness needs clarity in communication and active listening.</u></p>	 <p>Advanced Telephone Skills</p> 

Now, let us look at some more interesting features of telephone communication and in the last lecture I discussed with you about the basic skills that you can develop after a little bit of philosophizing about the use of telephone, but in this phone let us look at some advanced skills that you need to develop. So, that any phone call that you make you really make it and you do not you do not mar it when you make a call you finish the deal in a very win-win situation. If you are the person whose is making a call in the company everybody knows you will get the deal. So, you learn the art of making significant telephone calls and then you get the best out of it either for you personally or for the people around you in a professional climate.

Now, some more interesting features of telephone communication as I been telling it is the most commonly used and the most commonly misused form of communication often the receivers response is taken for granted mostly for the reason that both the speaker cannot see each other. So, they presume what the other person would be reacting at the other side and sometimes it may be entirely the different way the other person may be thinking or behaving or reacting now this is challenging because people presume. So, many things in their minds let me give you a very simple example and you will understand what I mean and why you need to make your telephone communication very perceptive and be very active in terms of listening.

Take this simple example a doctor and a patient both are living in the nearby vicinity the doctor is. So, busy, but then the patient wanted to talk to him freely sometimes outside. So, he is been asking for an appointment and then finally, he called the doctor and then the doctor said lets meet at 7 tomorrow, now the patient quickly asked where. So, the doctor said in the park during my walk, now on the one hand it looks like as if the doctor gave all the information and the patient got all the information and do you think that they would have met actually. They could not meet the reason is this the patient all the times sees the doctor going for a walk in the park from 6:30 to 7:30 and to the same park the patient also goes the doctor so busy and then.

So, absent minded he also remembered that this person is seen in the evening hours 7 pm when he goes there in the park for the walk in the evening, but then the doctor forgot to realize and tell him that he also takes a morning walk he takes walk twice in a day one around 7 am is definitely in the park and another around 7 pm he is definitely in the park. Now, when he told him he assumed that the patient would meet him in the morning hour that is around 7 am in the park.

Now, the patient since he has seen the doctor only in the evening time he presumed that the doctor is giving time in the evening simply since they did not say am or pm morning or evening both could not meet and very serious communication could not take place. So, the lesson from this effectiveness needs clarity in communication and active listening if both people slightly cooperated and reduced their presumption may be if the doctor told him I mean 7 pm or if you wanted in the morning if he said 7' o clock in the morning, 7 am in the morning or if the patient when he asked him where when you said in the park during my walk.

So, what time is it in the morning or in the evening? So, it could have actually contributed to the effectiveness in the communication since both presumed and we cannot blame both of them because this is the game that people play when they are involved in communication we look at more of this when we actually go deep into communication.

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Some Tips for Developing Advanced Skills

**Enunciate Clearly: Examples: "Lab staff"
"10 Frogs" (medium size!)
Let your voice radiate warmth, respect,
helpfulness.**

**If you represent a company, do not begin
with "Hello". Start with the name of the
company, use polite greetings (Good
Morning), add your name and offer to help.**

**Example: "Sterling Services. Good Morning.
This is Ronita. How may I help you?"**

Advanced Telephone Skills

Right now when we discussed about advanced skills in terms of using telephone I would like to give some more tips for developing these advanced skills.

Whenever you speak you need to enunciate clearly you have to speak pronounce clearly when I say pronounce clearly you need not have to pronounce like the native American or native British person who is speaking English, but if you are speaking in English or in any language just speak in such a manner. So, that the words are not misunderstood now take an example of this. So, there was a requirement committee that met from MHRD one of the institutions and then while meeting. So, the person from MHRD was talking to the head of the department of that institution and then the head of the department he asked whether he need something for the next academic year and the head of the department got up and he said that.

So, we need at least 5 laptops. So, then again the person ask why do you need 5 lab staff of already you have only one lab. So, he said that no-no, we need 5 laptops. So, again he said why. So, one lab and already you have a lab staff. So, he kept on saying we need five lap tops lap tops. So, then somebody got up and said sir what he means is that lab person is there, but he needs laptops, but the way he said laptops to the computer it was heard as lab staff. So, the word was not pronounced clearly. So, that caused the confusion.

So, there was another interesting case a professor a scientist actually he wanted to give a demonstration to some of the students about using some frogs in an experiment. So, he called his assistant and then, he just gives a call and then he said that can you get me ten frogs tomorrow. So, the other person was busy and then he just heard something and then he just wondered that. So, sir that will be done, but what size do you need. So, they want the small size one or big size one or medium size and then the professor and the scientist thought that medium size will do next day he has called all the students and other researchers and they are about to start the experiment with the frogs and he was waiting for that, but the person the assistant brought actually 10 frogs.

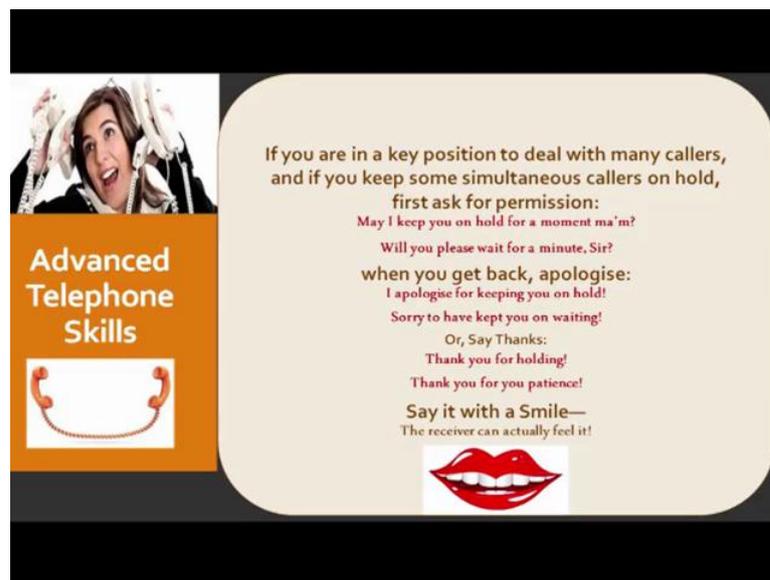
So, frocks the gowns that small children can wear of medium size. So, frogs the way the scientist pronounced was heard by the other person as frocks now again here either the sender or the receiver could have actually said see frogs the animals that I want not frocks or even when the other person heard that as frocks even when he was asking for the size may be the scientist should have realized that he is actually thinking of something else not the frogs, but he again thought that I do not need big frogs. So, I can go for medium one and then he said. So, the confusion could be easily removed if both tried to seek explanation and clarification and either one was active listener it could have been sorted out.

When you talk apart from enunciating clearly make your voice radiate warmth respect and helpfulness. So, it should radiate warmth. So, when they hear they should feel very warmth they should be able to feel that you are talking in a very respectful manner and you are offering help. So, you give some support if you represent a company do not begin with hello. So, normally when we make a phone call we say hello then we all the time we keep saying hello, hello, hello, but then if it is a company that looks. So, informal and even impolite to start with it if you are representing if you are the receptionist if you are the business executive who is representing it, you start with the name of the company use polite greetings immediately after that such as good morning good afternoon good evening and add your name. So, that you tell who is the one who is speaking and then offer to help.

Example you can begin by saying if you are representing the company sterling services, Good morning, this is Ronita, and how may I help you? So, sterling services you begin with the company's name good morning you start with the greeting and then introduce

you say this is Ronita, I am Ronita either way and then how may I help you. So, this indicates that. So, you are trying to give some kind of concern at the beginning of the talk itself and then it makes the other person slightly open up if you are in a key position to deal with many callers. So, again either at the higher level as an executive again you attend to so many calls or at another lower level in the receptionist level or in the call center.

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Advanced Telephone Skills

If you are in a key position to deal with many callers, and if you keep some simultaneous callers on hold, first ask for permission:

- May I keep you on hold for a moment ma'm?
- Will you please wait for a minute, Sir?

when you get back, apologise:

- I apologise for keeping you on hold!
- Sorry to have kept you on waiting!

Or, Say Thanks:

- Thank you for holding!
- Thank you for your patience!

Say it with a Smile—
The receiver can actually feel it!

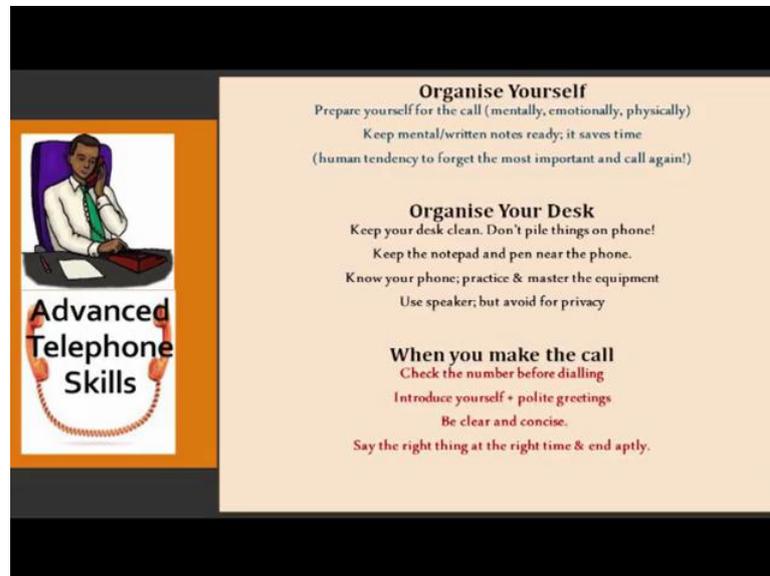


If you are dealing with so many calls and then if you have to keep simultaneous callers on hold. So, keeping two three people on hold you need to be very polite and you have to follow some decorum some simple norms first ask for permission before you keep them on hold you can ask politely may I keep you on hold for a moment madam or you can ask will you please wait for a minute sir. So, normally when you request politely nobody is going to say no they will say please.

I will wait or make it as great as possible and when you get back when you give the connection back apologize very politely you can say I apologize for keeping you on hold or you can say I am sorry to have kept you on waiting then say thanks if you are not apologizing you can say thank you sir for holding thank you madam for your patience. So, that makes the other person feel the warmth and then they will feel like respecting the other person at the end that is you and then when you do it as I have been telling

from the previous one say it with the smile. So, the receiver can actually feel it the receiver can actually sense that you are smiling. So, you are actually cheerful.

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Advanced Telephone Skills

Organise Yourself
Prepare yourself for the call (mentally, emotionally, physically)
Keep mental/written notes ready; it saves time
(human tendency to forget the most important and call again!)

Organise Your Desk
Keep your desk clean. Don't pile things on phone!
Keep the notepad and pen near the phone.
Know your phone; practice & master the equipment
Use speaker; but avoid for privacy

When you make the call
Check the number before dialling
Introduce yourself + polite greetings
Be clear and concise.
Say the right thing at the right time & end aptly.

And when you are going to make very important calls the formal calls, sometimes you may have to order something for your company sometimes you even give a telephonic interview the calls again or making or marring your life and career on such occasions and in general make this as a practice organize yourself that is prepare yourself for the call mentally emotionally physically suppose it is an interview call keep the c v ready next to your hand and then remember how you should present yourself remember what you should be telling and then emotionally cheer yourself.

So, there may be some slight negative thoughts, but then you cheer up and then you say that yah I am going to make this feel strong mentally and then in terms of physicalness. So, keep yourself in a comfortable position. So, that you do not feel even if the call goes for half an hour forty five minutes to get up or move around. So, seat yourself in a comfortable chair and then you decide whether the room has to be cold using air conditioning or fan should be on if the fan is making too much noise it is better to switch of the fan and keep the air conditioner and so on. So, keep yourself physically comfortable also.

Now, in terms of mental preparation keep the notes ready in mind or even write it and keep it because it is save time sometimes you forget the most important thing. So, that is

again a human tendency to talk trivial things initially and then talk about the most important things towards the end and by the time the other person talked about something very interesting then you got distracted. So, finally, what happened you miss the important point and you have to call again suppose it is an overseas call? So, again you pay more on the other hand the other person at the other end may not be ready to receive your call also. So, his time is also precious.

So, keep this notes written preferably or at least mentally because it will save time money or your energy and the other persons energy also organize your desk when where ever you are keeping the phone keep your desk clean do not pile things on phone especially if you are using a cordless or. So, and then the cordless is lying. So, over that you have throne your shirt or tee shirt and then towel and then when the phone come you rush and then the ring sound is heard, but then you do not know where the phone is lying where the cordless is lying. So, you keep looking for it. So, do not do that do not pile anything on the phone keep it clean.

And keep the note pad and pen near the phone. So, as I was saying that if you are a right hander. So, keep it on the right side and phone you keep it on the left side and know your phone to day phones are coming with lot of facilities when nobody is making a call you make calls to your friends and others. So, use lots of options like speaker option like mute like hold and then like conference call and so on and then even a voice mail, how you can activate it what kind of voice mail can be recorded on your phone.

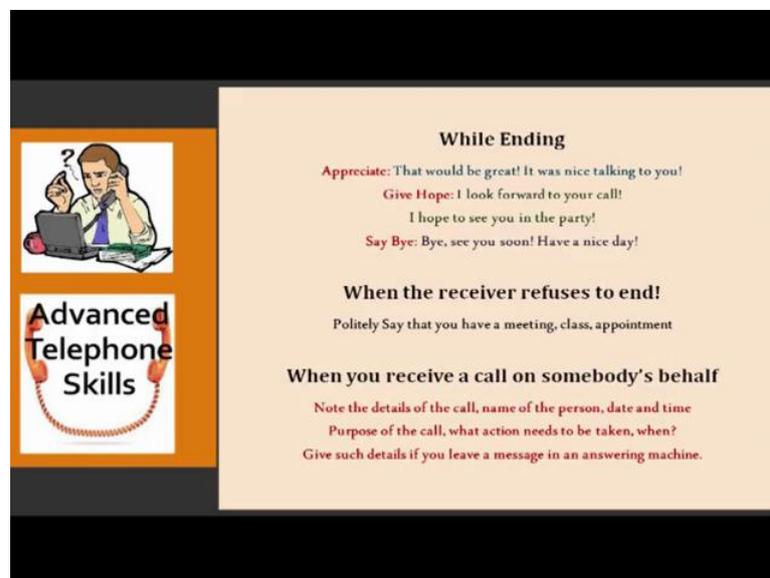
So, these things you should practice and you should master the equipment not when you are making a call, but even before the call you try to know everything phones will come with catalogues and good phones will have catalogues available online if you do not get it download the catalogue online and then try to master it most of the times if you are alone and then if you have a good phone system. So, use the speaker. So, that you hear it clearly and then you can also make notes without sweating without taking efforts and it is also good practice to use speaker, but then if others are around then you want to maintain privacy and then you can avoid using speaker.

When you make the call again you need to remember certain things you check the number before dialing because it is very, very unprofessional to dial a number and say that sorry its wrong number the professionals never make a wrong calls you just

carefully dial the number and then when you dial you check it properly and even the numbers that you would note it correctly and when you make the call introduce yourself it is very highly impolite to ask whether. So, and. So, is actually the one who has taken the phone you have to introduce yourself first this is John or this is Gupta or this is Pankaj, who is making the call and then give the polite greetings as I was saying good morning. So, am I talking to so and or is it the right time to talk to so and so, and then once the person accepts your greetings and then you know that it is the right person. So, be clear and concise what is it that you want to talk especially in professional ones even you can even right rehearse it before talking and say the right thing at the right time and end aptly

So, what do I mean by this sequence what you have to tell. So, you start with something less important and then proceed towards the other thing and then especially sometimes even you may be even slightly conducting interviews on phone. So, you sequence according to the way you want to ask questions and then gather information keep the most important one towards the end.

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Advanced Telephone Skills

While Ending

- Appreciate:** That would be great! It was nice talking to you!
- Give Hope:** I look forward to your call!
I hope to see you in the party!
- Say Bye:** Bye, see you soon! Have a nice day!

When the receiver refuses to end!

- Politely Say that you have a meeting, class, appointment

When you receive a call on somebody's behalf

- Note the details of the call, name of the person, date and time
- Purpose of the call, what action needs to be taken, when?
- Give such details if you leave a message in an answering machine.

So, let the person get warmed up and then tries to answer your question and then when you are reach the end appropriately while ending again you can follow some simple norms appreciate the person. So, you can say that would be great it was nice talking to you and then give or end with the sense of hope you may say I look forward to your call

you can also say I hope to see you in the party or I hope to see you somewhere in the meeting etcetera and very simple normal way of saying bye you can just say bye and then you can say see you soon or have a nice day and then you can close it.

Now, there are some troublesome speakers like they want to talk to you, either, they like your voice or they know you or you are a busy person and then they know that it is beneficial for them to talk to you. So, they hang on to the call. So, the receiver refuses to end the call now you have to politely say that whatever you have instead of being afraid of saying no you have to tell them if you have a meeting.

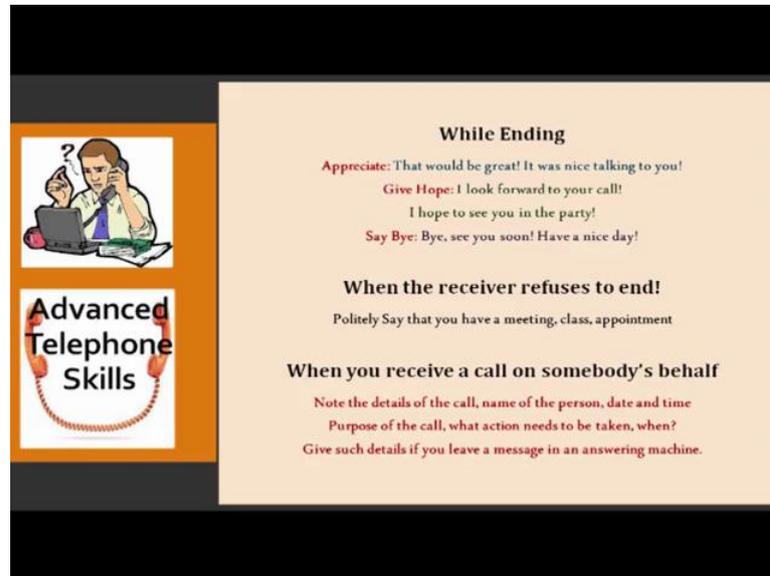
So, you tell them that you have a meeting and you are rushing to the meeting if you are a student or a teacher you can always say that you have a class or you have a lecture going on you want to attend to the talk or any appointment say you have an appointment with a doctor. So, you need to go and catch it up or even like you have an appointment for servicing your vehicle. So, these things you can just tell and then you can politely end the call and you can give time whenever you are free again if the other person wants to continue with that you can also tell them that if anything else is there they can message you or they can even email you.

In the coming lectures, we will also talk about how you can follow certain etiquette in terms of using emails, but right now you can just use that as another option especially to people who hold on to you and then they do not let you finish a call. So, you can give them that as an option when you receive a call on somebody's behalf like you are there the call is come for some body and then the person has asked you to make some important information and then you note those information and then you have to pass it to the other person.

So, this again may be because you are a receptionist or you are in a key position you are a manager or you are a colleague and then you receive the call and you have to pass this now it is important that you should note the details of the call instead of thinking that you will remember it and pass it especially in office situation corporate, you need to note the details of the calls such as first the name of the person the date in which the call is made because your colleague may come after three days after a week and you may not be there. So, you make a note of it and leave it on his and her table the time of the call and the purpose of the call why did the person call you and what did the person want from

your colleague. So, you mentioned that what action needs to be taken. So, if it is again a business situation somebody call somebody to follow up something send the order or even take an order and then when what is the time frame in which it has to be done.

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Advanced Telephone Skills

While Ending

- Appreciate:** That would be great! It was nice talking to you!
- Give Hope:** I look forward to your call!
I hope to see you in the party!
- Say Bye:** Bye, see you soon! Have a nice day!

When the receiver refuses to end!

- Politely Say that you have a meeting, class, appointment

When you receive a call on somebody's behalf

- Note the details of the call, name of the person, date and time
- Purpose of the call, what action needs to be taken, when?
- Give such details if you leave a message in an answering machine.

Give such details if you leave a message in an answering machine to if you have to call somebody and do that you give all these details. In professional situations it is better to use a format, but even some officers at home they try to use the format like this. So, simply it is like telephone notes. So, you leave space for date time it is easy for the person to note it and then message for whom did the message come? So, write the person's name from and who called this one and then what is the message that is, what is the purpose? So, as I said it could be just ordering booking a room, etcetera and what action needs to be taken also can be written there and contact number or contact address or anything that needs to be noted you can note it there also.

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The slide is titled "Advanced Telephone Skills" and focuses on the challenge of "Delivering Unpleasant News". It features an illustration of a person at a desk on the left, a doctor in the top center, and a child on the right. The main text includes:

- Challenges!**
- Delivering Unpleasant News**
- Don't beat around the bush! Get straight to the point
- State the reason, provide alternative solution
- SAY SORRY: I am afraid . . . I do apologise . . .
- IMPORTANT: You should earn the other's respect!

At the bottom, there is an illustration of two people talking.

So, that will help you as a format to avoid any kind of miscommunication or sometimes you miss noting it and the other person does not call the other side of the person is a very important person and he gets angry or he stops entire communication business transaction with your office. So, those things can be avoided.

Now, before I conclude I just want to highlight that there are some challenges when you slowly become a professional when you become an advanced telephone user in a professional manner one of the challenges we will discuss now and in the coming lecture I will be discussing more challenges and then the required qualities that you need to tackle those challenges one of the challenges that you need to face is delivering unpleasant news now delivering unpleasant news can be anything like an accident that happened and whatever cargo whatever materials which were carried.

So, they all got wasted, for example, ice cream you are sending from one truck load of ice cream to another place. So, there was an accident immediately the accident happened and the cooler inside stopped working the ice cream started melting and this has to go for a party then the people are waiting for the ice cream to come. So, from this kind of unpleasant news it can be even death of somebody is expected, but the person died. So, it could be any kind of calamity any accident or any delay. So, you are supposed to deliver something on this day, but you cannot deliver it because your workers went on a strike. So, you need just two days more.

So, how are you going to handle this now generally when you have to deliver unpleasant news do not beat around the bush do not try to tell things which are not relevant and then slowly come because it will annoy the other person get straight to the point of course, in a very polite manner, for example, you can say that sir you are expecting this ice cream truck to reach by this time, but then I am very sorry to inform you that it met with an accident now state the reason. So, how it happened may be you can say that it was not our drivers fault, but from the opposite side the other truck person came and then he was drunk and then he hit our truck. So, the reason will actually make the other person cool down somewhat.

Now, provide alternative solution. So, you can say that for example, sir we are not able to bring this to you because it is has started melting, but we have a sister concern there the only problem is like it is not our brand, but then the brand is equally good. So, we can just give them a call and then ask them to deliver may be they will slightly supply less than what we can do, but at least you can manage the situation. So, that is the alternative solution that will also make the other person feel comfortable and at the end of it you can say sorry or even when you begin that you can say I am afraid that so met with an accident I do apologize.

So, these things will make the other person feel comfortable now at the end of it realize the most important point these are very critical and very challenging situation, but having conveyed this you can expect any kind of response the person can get angry the person may not be willing to accept whatever compromise that you are giving or the person may be softened by the kind words that you are using and the nice suggestion that you are giving.

At the end of it remember you should talk, you should convince the other person in such a manner that you should earn the others respect the person knows, for example, if you are going to covey some very bad news the person knows that you have said something sorry usually people get angry with the person who brings it, but at the same time the way you say it and then the comfort that you are giving should earn you the respect for you that will help you to go ahead with communication with the same person in the long time to come.

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I would like to conclude with one code from Sophocles which is close to the thought I was concluding in the previous one. So, he says that, "No one loves the messenger who brings bad news." So, if you see the kings if they see somebody bringing the bad news go to the level of beheading the person killing the messenger immediately the one who brings bad news.

So, that is true even now when you bring bad news people do not like you, but it is important as I said if you use all the polite mannerisms and the decorum that I suggested in this you will be able to earn respect and it is important that at the end of the call even if you have delivered the bad news. So, they feel that they talked to somebody who is very nice warmth genuine and respectful. So, with this note I conclude this lecture thank you for watching this in the next one I will come with a final discussion on improving your telephone skills.

Thank you, have a nice day