

Meta-Communication Checklist

(How to make sure what you mean is what they hear)

1. Set Your Intent

- Before speaking, ask: *What do I want the other person to understand, feel, or do?*
- Choose words and tone that serve that intent.

2. Name the 'Why'

- Tell them why you're saying it.
 - Example: "I'm sharing this because I want to help you succeed."

3. Signal the Tone

- Use cues (tone of voice, facial expression, posture) that match your message.
- If your tone contradicts your words, people believe the tone.

4. Confirm Understanding

- Don't assume they got it.
- Ask: "What's your take on what I just said?" or "How does this land for you?"

5. Adjust for the Listener

- Consider their perspective, past experiences, and possible interpretations.
- If needed, add clarifying context upfront.



Pro tip:

If the stakes are high - feedback on important projects, big decisions that can't be reversed, emotional conversations with key stakeholders - always **layer the meaning**: say the message *and* explain why you're saying it the way you are.