

Upgrade Program Communication Plan

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Introduction

This document is part of a series of upgrade plans for every [area](#) of your life. It's broadly designed for a single, middle-class, 30-something living in a major city in a developed country.

Please go to "File" > "Make a copy" and make a copy of it for yourself. Then fill it out section by section according to your particular needs and circumstances. Perhaps add sections or items, delete them, change the order, and so on.

Your aim should be to make the plan as applicable and useful to you as possible. You should not follow the plan blindly—think it through for yourself.

Note that this process might be challenging. You might need to teach yourself things you aren't very knowledgeable about yet. You might feel like you need to do preliminary work in a different life area first. That's okay. Figure out broadly what makes sense for you, operationalize that understanding as specific actions in the [Actions](#) section, and then do them.

If it feels overwhelming, just start with the parts you find most valuable and do what you can. Tackle the rest over time. It may also help to set aside a dedicated [day](#) to work exclusively on this by yourself or with friends. Or you may choose to enlist an [UP Coach](#) to co-design and execute this plan alongside you.

Epistemic Status

This is an overview of how confident the principal [author](#) is in this plan.

- Generally high confidence in plan
- Based on dozens of hours of direct study of the literature and thousands of hours of iterative practice

Objectives

Decide what objectives you have with this plan and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample objectives.

1. Increase communication level until your level of confidence is at 7 on a 1-10 scale
 - a. Improve language ability
 - b. Improve verbal communication
 - c. Improve nonverbal communication
 - d. Improve written communication
2. Reduce the chance of misunderstandings with your audience
3. Ensure the outcomes of your communications are aligned with your values and goals

Metrics

Decide what metrics you will use to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan. Also include the frequency in which you'll evaluate those metrics. For example, ad hoc, once, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually or per decade. Below are some sample metrics.

- Communication Rating: How would you rate your communication ability on a 1-10 scale?
 - Asking 10 friends, family members, and colleagues "How well do I communicate on a 1-10 scale?"
- Writing Rating: How would I rate my writing skills on a 1-10 scale?
- How would I rate each public speech I've given over the past 12 months on a 1-10 scale?
- Language Proficiency Test Scores

Values

List all of your relevant values and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample values.

1. Clarity
2. Effectiveness
3. Persuasion

Value Analysis

List and then analyze all of the costs and benefits of this plan. Potentially also estimate expected value, cost-benefit, return on investment, and/or net present value.

- Time costs: 1 - 2,500 hours
- Financial costs: \$0 - \$10,000 dollars (e.g., coaches, training, books, etc.)
- Benefits: \$X in potentially large objective or subjective benefits

Strategies

Decide on your high-level strategies for achieving your objectives. Below are some sample strategies.

Key People

- Do the work on your own
- Outsource some or most of the work to experts (e.g., speaking coaches, speech therapists, etc.)

- Outsource some or most of the work to assistants

Key Timings

- Make incremental changes every day until you reach your desired communication skills
- Make as many changes as you can over a set period (e.g., one month, six months or one year)
- Make changes as intensively as you can until you've reached your desired communication skills

Actions

List the specific actions you will take to achieve your objectives. You should add these tasks to your project management system unless you are choosing to do them now. Below is an example sequence of actions you might take.

1. Describe your [mental model](#) of your communication
 - a. Create a visual representation from memory without referencing this plan or outside sources of information
 - b. Create a new visual representation after thoroughly studying this plan and any relevant sources of information
 - c. Pay special attention to the improvements in the second version as incorporating those new insights may be crucial to the success of your plan
2. Finish every section of this plan, including the [assessments](#), [tools](#), and [resources](#) below
3. Map out all communication channels
 - a. Update each to your desired preferences (e.g., privacy levels, public profiles, etc.)
4. Create a Communicating With Me Guide
 - a. Include communication norm preferences, communication channel preferences, conflict resolution preferences, pet peeves, personality profiles, and other useful information
 - b. Selectively share as needed or post to your personal website or communication channels
5. Begin communicating per your community's norms, or barring that, per your publicized Communicating With Me Guide
 - a. In many contexts, this means responding to all emails, texts, calls, direct messages, letters, and other forms of communication promptly (e.g., between seconds and a few weeks, with many types of communication requiring a reply within 1-3 days during normal periods)
 - b. In some contexts, for inbound messages you choose not to respond to you can ignore, but in other cultures inbound messages require a reply stating you will not reply further
6. Study [nonviolent communication](#) (NVC)

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7. Consider taking nonviolent communication (NVC) [training](#)
8. Consider taking a [Toastmasters](#) program (e.g., [Toastmasters Pathways](#) / [Visionary Communication Pathway](#))
9. Consider improving language ability
 - a. Learn 1-20 new words per day
 - b. Increase the weekly quantity of your readings
 - c. Install a grammar checker
 - d. Use an app to practice language skills (e.g., [Duolingo](#))
 - e. Take language courses
10. Improve verbal communication
 - a. Hire a voice coach to develop an optimal voice tone, speed, and volume
 - b. Study communication strategies
 - c. Study debate techniques
 - d. Practice public speaking
 - i. Schedule one talk/month for the next 12 months with at least 10 people in the audience
 - ii. Conduct the talks
 - iii. Obtain quantitative and qualitative feedback through real-time and post-event surveys
 - iv. Use the feedback to continually improve
 - e. Reduce filler words
 - i. Track all filler or hedging words over a 14 day period
 - ii. Actively replace unwanted words with pauses or desired phrases
 - f. Eliminate common problem situations
 - i. Track specific communication situations where you do not think you communicate well
 - ii. Analyze how you could have improved after each situation
11. Improve nonverbal communication
 - a. Assess current nonverbal communication habits to identify areas of improvement
 - b. Practice optimal posture
 - c. Practice optimal eye contact
 - d. Practice meditation to improve awareness and reduce subconscious actions
 - e. Learn about the neural mechanisms underlying nonverbal communication
12. Improve written communication
 - a. Practice journaling daily
 - b. Find an editing partner
 - c. Take a creative writing course
 - d. Hire a professional writer

Assessments

List all of the assessments you might take to understand how you're doing compared to your objectives. Below are some sample assessments.

- [Autism Spectrum Quotient \(AQ\)](#): a diagnostic questionnaire measuring the severity of Autism-Spectrum Disorders in individuals
- [Autism Spectrum Screening Questionnaire \(ASSQ\)](#): a questionnaire developed to assess the prevalence of Asperger Syndrome and high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder
- [Email Meter](#): a tool that pulls email data and sends a report with analytics and detailed statistics
- [Nelson-Denny Reading Test \(NDRT\)](#): a test to assess vocabulary, comprehension, and reading rate (US \$302)
- [Readability Test](#): a tool that estimates the readability of a passage of text using the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, Gunning Fog Index, SMOG Index, Coleman Liau Index, and Automated Readability Index
- [Ritvo Autism & Asperger Diagnostic Scale \(RAADS-14\)](#): a screening instrument to aid in the identification of patients who may have undiagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder
- [Scholastic Aptitude Test \(SAT\)](#): a test to measure verbal, math, and writing skills
- [Short Autism-Spectrum Quotient \(AQ\)](#): a diagnostic questionnaire measuring the severity of Autism-Spectrum Disorders in individuals

Tools

List all of the tools you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample tools.

- [Ablo](#)
- [Asana](#)
- [Babble](#)
- [Bananatag](#)
- [Becorrect](#)
- [BitBite](#)
- [Burner](#)
- [Branch](#)
- [Clubhouse](#)
- [Duolingo](#)
- [Describe](#)
- [Dex](#)
- [Dialup](#)
- [Discord](#)
- [Duolingo](#)
- [Earth Class Mail](#)
- [Education First \(EF\)](#)

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- [Fabriq](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Facebook Messenger](#)
- [FaceTime](#)
- [Fireflies](#)
- [Garden](#)
- [Gmail](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Google Recorder](#)
- [Google Translate](#)
- [Google Voice](#)
- [GoToMeeting](#)
- [Grammarly](#)
- [Happy Scribe](#)
- [Hey](#)
- [iMessage](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Italki](#)
- [Join.me](#)
- [Krisp](#)
- [Letter](#)
- [Lifesize](#)
- [Limeade](#)
- [Line](#)
- [Lipreading](#)
- [Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications](#)
- [Living Room Conversations](#)
- [Marco Polo](#)
- [Memrise](#)
- [Monica](#)
- [My Webspot](#)
- [Nat](#)
- [Ntwrk](#)
- [One Hour Translation](#)
- [Otter](#)
- [Outlook](#)
- [Phone](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Privnote](#)
- [Quillbot](#)
- [Rev](#)
- [Rockalingua](#)

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- [Rosetta Stone](#)
- [Short Message Service \(SMS\)](#)
- [Shortwhale](#)
- [Skype](#)
- [Slack](#)
- [Snail mail](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [Sonix](#)
- [Sparrow](#)
- [SpatialChat](#)
- [SuperMemo](#)
- [Tandem](#)
- [Tandem](#)
- [Telegram](#)
- [Texts](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [Title Case Converter](#)
- [T-Mobile Travel Plans](#)
- [Toastmasters International](#)
- [Twilio](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [UpHabit](#)
- [Verbit](#)
- [Viber](#)
- [Voicemail](#)
- [UpdateAI](#)
- [Virtual Post Mail](#)
- [Wall Street English](#)
- [WeChat](#)
- [WhatsApp](#)
- [Whereby](#)
- [Woebot Health](#)
- [Wonder](#)
- [Yabla](#)
- [Zoom](#)

Resources

List all of the resources you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample resources.

- [Conscious Business: How to Build Value Through Values](#)
- [How to Write in Plain English](#)
- [Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion](#)
- [Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die](#) (UP Top Pick)
- [Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It](#)
- [Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships \(Nonviolent Communication Guides\)](#)
- [Oxford Guide to Plain English](#)
- [Radical Candor: Be A Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity](#)
- [Start with No: The Negotiating Tools that the Pros Don't Want You to Know](#)
- [Street Epistemology](#) (UP Top Pick)
- [The Rules of Civil Conversation](#) (UP Top Pick)

Schedule

Decide on which days you will take which actions. You should add these dates to your calendar now.

- [Date]: Finalize plan
- [Dates]: Execute plan
- [Dates]: Review plan's outcomes

Predictions

Predict how well you will do in achieving your objectives.

- [Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that I will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].
- Combined: We predict with an average [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].

Outcomes

Objectively record how well you achieved your objectives.

- [Date #1]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #2]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #3]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #4]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #5]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #6]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #7]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #8]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #9]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #10]: [Outcomes]

Notes

Add any random thoughts, questions, and uncertainties you may have.

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