**Module 1 Lesson 5 Assignment: Why Communication Skills Matter**

The following assignment will help you understand the importance of being specific when offering and receiving communication. Often times our meaning gets lost, twisted or misunderstood because we haven't been specific enough in our communication or we haven't asked enough questions about the problem.

**ROLE PLAY #1**

***Scenario*:** Jade has her first job mowing lawns. She works for her best friend’s brother who owns a landscaping company. She’s had the job for about three weeks and really feels like she’s getting into the groove. In fact, it’s the perfect job for her: she loves being outside and appreciates the fact that she can work on her own and even listen to her music! Jade arrives early at Mr. Z.’s house (her first customer of the day) and gets ready to begin mowing.

*Mr. Z*.: You’re finally here!

*Jade*: Hi, Mr. Z. Yes, I’m here to mow your lawn.

*Mr. Z*.: Well, you didn’t do a very good job last week.

*Jade*: I wasn't the person who mowed your lawn. But I's like to hear why you were unhappy with the job.

*Mr. Z*.: It was just a mess!

*Jade*: Can you please be more specific? What exactly didn't you like? In what way was it a mess?

*Mr. Z.*: Well, it looked just awful.

*Jade*: Mr. Z., I really want to make sure that whatever upset you last time doesn't happen again. If you tell me exactly what you want done differently in the future, it will really help me to make sure your lawn is cut exactly how you like it.

*Mr. Z*.: Well, the cut grass was left on the lawn, and the edges weren’t straight.

*Jade:* Okay, let me be sure that I understand. Besides mowing, you want us to make sure that we rake up, remove the cut grass, and be more careful to straighten the edging.

*Mr. Z.:* Yes, that is exactly what I expect!

*Jade*: Thanks Mr. Z. I'll be sure to do those things today, and will let the boss know that that's what you would like done in the future.

*Mr. Z*.: Thank you very much.

**ROLE PLAY #2**

***Scenario*:** Will works in a large dental office and winds up rushing to get to work every day after school. His job tasks include filing, making photocopies, stuffing envelopes, and answering the telephone. Ms. T, the office manager, has asked to speak with Will about his time sheet.

*Ms. T*.: Hello, Will. I would like to talk with you.

*Will*: Yes, Ms. T.?

*Ms. T*.: Will, I’ve been watching your time this week, and I’m quite concerned.

*Will*: Ms. T., I see that you’re not happy, but will you please be more specific?

*Ms. T*.: You’re not getting here on time.

*Will*: I know I’ve been arriving to work late, and I am sorry.

*Ms. T.*: Well look at your time today. You were supposed to be here at 3:15 this afternoon, and now it's 3:30 and you've just walked in. We need to be able to depend on you to be here at the time you're scheduled to work.

*Will:*I understand that you expect me to be here on time. I'm getting here as quickly as I can after school. Would it be possible to change my start time to 3:30? I can put the extra 15 minutes in at the end of the workday instead.

*Ms. T.*: Well, I suppose we can try that. Are you absolutely sure that you can make it here by 3:30 each day?

*Will:*I'm sorry that I've been getting here late and upsetting you. I really do think that I can be here each day by 3:30, but if for some reason I can't make it here by that time, I'll be sure to call and let you know.

*Ms. T.:*That would be very helpful. Thank you Will.

**Assignment:**

After reading each of the scenarios, answer the following questions:

*Role Play #1:*

* In your opinion, how did Jade handle Mr. Z.'s comments?
* What do you feel Jade did correctly, and what, if anything, do you think she should do differently?
* What are your thoughts about Mr. Z.'s communication skills? What, if anything, do you think he should have done correctly?
* How could Mr. Z.'s or Jade's messages be interpreted differently based on their **tone?**

*Role Play #2:*

* How do you think Ms. T. handled the situation with Will's lateness?
* In your opinion, how did Will handle Ms. T.'s disapproval?
* What, if anything, do you think Will or Ms. T. should have done differently?
* How could Ms. T.'s or Will's messages be interpreted differently based on their **tone?**

*Journal Entry****:***

Think about a time when a parent, teacher or friend criticized you. Describe the following:

* What happened? How did this make you feel? How did you handle it?
* What might you do differently if something like this were to happen again in the future? Did this experience change the way you give feedback to others?

From: "Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success", a resource developed through extensive feedback from teachers and students, in conjunction with the lesson "Communication Skills for the Workplace" by Audrey Milne