



Fundraising Conversations with Style

The Linguistics of Style and the Style of Fundraising

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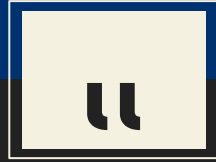
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Road Map

- Linguistics Background
 - Style
 - Indirectness
 - Frame
 - Examples
- Practical Applications
 - Written Strategy
 - Conversational Moves

Style Profiles

how we play the conversation game

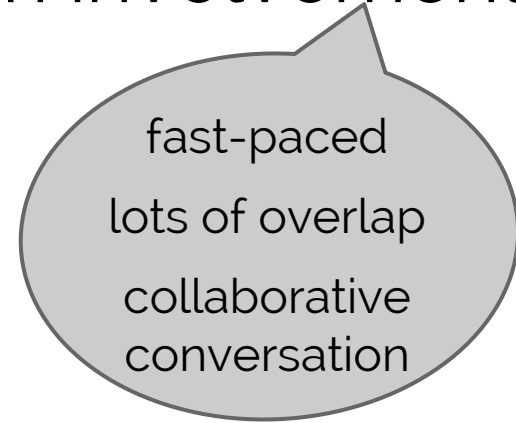
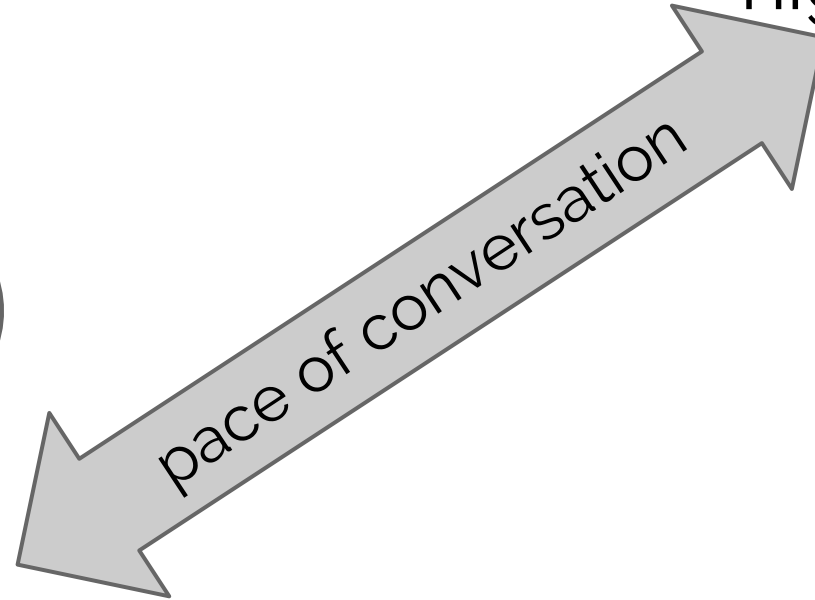


“The biggest mistake is believing there is one right way to listen, to talk, to have a conversation, or to have a relationship.”

Deborah Tannen

Some Basic Style

high involvement



high considerateness

Some Basic Style

Susan Steinbach's Sports Metaphors for Style

source: <http://bit.ly/1F3ZLsP>

high considerateness



flexible



high involvement

pace of play

Characteristics of Style

Considerateness

- don't impose
- general topics
- flow of talk
- slower pace
- pause to conclude
- no overlap
- even tone

Flexible

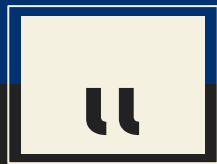
- hold the floor
- strategic pauses
- some overlap
- overt turn signals
- dynamic

Involvement

- persistent
- personal topics
- abrupt topic shift
- quicker pace
- overlap common
- participatory
- expressive tone

Indirectness

or trying to get what you want by not asking for what you want



If I don't tell you what I want directly, and you prefer not to give me what I want, I need not feel rejected and you need not feel guilty, because I never really asked for it.

Indirectness

Indirectness surfaces when we want something but don't want to ask for it because it seems impolite.

The most common strategy for mitigating this is making a general observation instead of asking.

Indirectness

Indirectness is about “saving face” or being polite.

‘Face’ refers to 2 conflicting desires:

- to look good & be approved of by others
- to be free to act without imposition by others

Indirectness

“It’s so cold in here!” -avoiding imposition

“I’ll be in town visiting other alumni.”

“You’re such a good cook.” -appeal to desire for approval

“I’d like to get to know you better.”

“Can you believe we’ve been dating for five years?” -both avoids imposition & appeals to approval

“You’ve been successful in your profession and I’d like to know how Pitt has played a role in your success.”

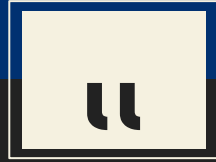
Indirectness

Why is indirectness bad?

- dropping “hints” that others may not get
- may require repeated attempts
- takes a lot of mental effort
- mixed messages for the other party
- confusion in frame

Frame

another word for context cues



“Social frameworks provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of the human being.”

Frame

Goffman says that framing allows us to:

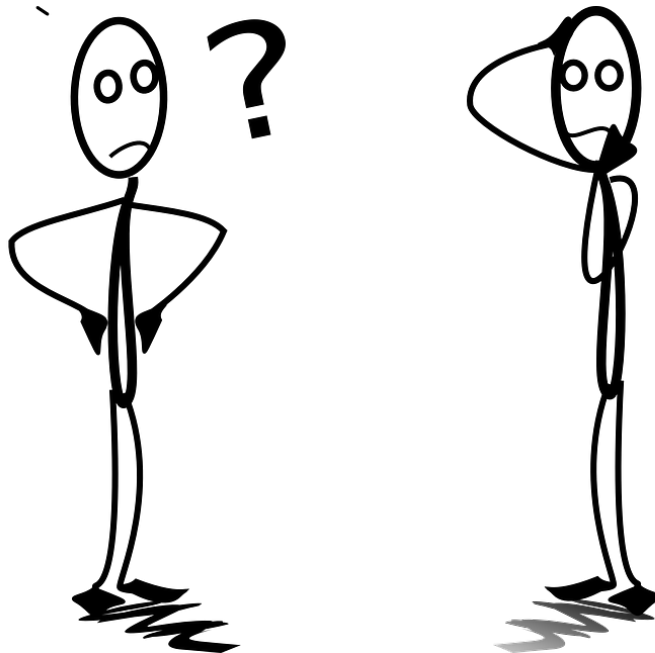
locate, perceive, identify, and label events

thus:

**rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and
guiding actions**

Frame

Mismatched frames can be confusing and awkward.



Practical Applications

put it into practice

DEALING WITH DIFFERENT STYLES

- ◉ Set Expectation on First Call; First Meeting, etc.
- ◉ Up-Front Contract
- ◉ Use a written strategy to think through visit.
- ◉ Set time-frame

WRITTEN STRATEGY

Strategy and Research Profile

JOHN SMITH

A&S '88 BA (POLITICAL SCIENCE)

Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2015

Time: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Location: 107 Cathedral of Learning

Attendees:

- 1) John Smith, A&S '88, '92, Biology**
- 2) Julie Seavy, Director of Development**

Goal of Visit:

- 1) To determine how the library was instrumental in his research efforts while in undergraduate and graduate school.**
- 2) To learn about John's background and to see how he might be involved in the University (board of visitors, committees, etc.)**
- 3) To inspire John to invest in the University philanthropically.**

WRITTEN STRATEGY

Conversation Styles:

- He is Indirect
- He is Highly Considerate

Strategy:

- 1) Frame the conversation so he's knows you are there to talk about philanthropy.
- 2) Thank him for his involvement with and support of the University, specifically the library.
- 3) Ask his advice, "If you could see the library do one thing to support students, what would it be?"
- 4) Explain what relationship COULD look like (using third-party stories).
- 5) Use words like "May I continue?," "What do you think?"
- 6) Set next steps and, if possible a Time Frame.

Recommended Outcomes:

- 1) To determine if there is an interest in supporting the library at a major gift level.
- 2) To have him understand his value to the University.

DEALING WITH INDIRECTNESS

- ◉ Practice saying, “My role is to engage alumni in a philanthropic relationship with the University.”
- ◉ Get agreement/approval that you can continue conversation. “I mentioned my role as a fundraiser, may I take a few minutes to tell you about that?”
- ◉ Make it clear you will work together to determine best option.
- ◉ Provide a Road Map.

FRAME THE CONVERSATION

- “I’d like to schedule a meeting with you at your convenience to talk about your relationship with the University.” (Use three Ps.)
- “There are many ways to structure a gift and I’m happy to work with you and whomever you deem appropriate to find the best option for you.”

FRAME THE CONVERSATION

- Use Third Party Stories
- Provide written example of paperwork and/or process.
- Always leave with a next step confirmed (meeting, document, campus visit, etc.)
- Determine the Decision-Maker. Spouse? Children? Financial Advisor?

Concluding Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts

- Be gutsy
 - Take control of the conversation using style
- Be direct
 - Say what you really mean
- Be clear
 - Know what you're both working towards

Questions?

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