



How to Paraphrase During Coaching or Facilitation

Paraphrasing is repeating in your words what you interpreted someone else to be saying. Paraphrasing is powerful means to further the understanding of the other person – or members of a group – and yourself, and can greatly increase the impact of other's comments. It can translate comments so that even more people can understand them. When paraphrasing during coaching or facilitation:

- ❑ Put the focus of the paraphrase on what the other person implied, not on what you wanted him/her to imply, e.g., don't say, "I believe what you meant to say was ...". Instead, say "If I'm hearing you right, you conveyed that ...?"
- ❑ Phrase the paraphrase as a question, "So you're saying that ...?", so that the other person has the responsibility and opportunity to refine his/her original comments in response to your question.
- ❑ Put the focus of the paraphrase on the other person, e.g., if the person said, "I don't get enough resources to do what I want," then don't paraphrase, "We probably all don't get what we want, right?"
- ❑ Put the ownership of the paraphrase on yourself, e.g., "If I'm hearing you right ...?" or "If I understand you correctly ...?"
- ❑ Put the ownership of the other person's words on him/her, e.g., say "If I understand you right, you're saying that ...?" or "... you believe that ...?" or "... you feel that ...?"
- ❑ In the paraphrase, use some of the words that the other person used. For example, if the other person said, "I think we should do more planning around here." You might paraphrase, "If I'm hearing you right in this strategic planning workshop, you believe that more strategic planning should be done in our community?"
- ❑ Don't judge or evaluate the other person's comments, e.g., don't say, "I wonder if you really believe that?" or "Don't you feel out-on-a-limb making that comment?"
- ❑ You can use a paraphrase to validate your impression of the other's comments, e.g., you could say, "So you were frustrated when ...?"
- ❑ The paraphrase should be shorter than the original comments made by the other person.
- ❑ If the other person responds to your paraphrase that you still don't understand him/her, then give the other person 1-2 chances to restate his position. Then you might cease the paraphrasing; otherwise, you might embarrass or provoke the other person.



How to Effectively Summarize During Coaching and Facilitation

A summary is a concise overview of the most important points from a communication, whether it's from a conversation, presentation or document. Summarizing is a very important skill for an effective communicator.

A good summary can verify that people are understanding each other, can make communications more efficient, and can ensure that the highlights of communications are captured and utilized.

When summarizing, consider the following guidelines:

- ❑ When listening or reading, look for the main ideas being conveyed.
- ❑ Look for any one major point that comes from the communication. What is the person trying to accomplish in the communication?
- ❑ Organize the main ideas, either just in your mind or written down.
- ❑ Write a summary that lists and organizes the main ideas, along with the major point of the communicator.
- ❑ The summary should always be shorter than the original communication.
- ❑ Does not introduce any new main points into the summary – if you do, make it clear that you're adding them.
- ❑ If possible, have other readers or listeners also read your summary and tell you if it is understandable, accurate and complete.