

“Ten Laws of Human Communication” By Hugh Mackay, Why Don’t People Listen? (1994)

Australian psychologist and social researcher, Hugh Mackay’s ‘10 Laws of Human Communication’ has become the go to guide for the Public Relations industry. It’s not only for the PR pros though. It is a great set of rules that can help us all better improve communication with each other and our customers.

1. It’s not what our message does to the listener, but what the listener does with our message, that determines our success as communicators.
2. Listeners generally interpret messages in ways which make them feel comfortable and secure.
3. When people’s attitudes are attacked head-on, they are likely to defend those attitudes and, in the process, to reinforce them.
4. People pay most attention to messages which are relevant to their own circumstances and point of view.
5. People who feel insecure in a relationship are unlikely to be good listeners.
6. People are more likely to listen to us if we also listen to them.
7. People are more likely to change in response to a combination of new experiences and communication than in response to communication alone.
8. People are more likely to support a change which affects them if they are consulted before the change is made.
9. The message in what is said will be interpreted in the light of how, when, and where and by whom it is said.
10. Lack of self-knowledge and unwillingness to resolve our own internal conflicts makes it harder for us to communicate with other people.