

How did this guy get through security?

You often wonder how some people get into this country. Case in point: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He's the president of Iran and he's in our country to address the United Nations and talk to a group of students and faculty at Columbia University. How in the world did he get by security at the airport? Wouldn't his name be on the list of those denied entry? Isn't he the guy we feel is arming the insurgents who are killing our American troops in Iraq? Does he not rule a country that harbors terrorists? Isn't Iran part of the axis of evil? How many people were on his plane? Were some of them terrorists just catching a free ride? And to think he also requested permission to visit ground zero in New York City, a request that was swiftly denied. So he's a head of state. Big deal! There are some heads we would rather not see on our soil. Of course the argument is he's here to address the U.N. Fine. But need we provide him a platform at one of our universities so he can dirty up our place? Ahmadinejad wins, no matter how you look at it. He's here, and that's where he wants to be, proving to the rest of the world he is among its major players.

—Tom Dreiling

Here's how to handle mistakes you make

The thing a reporter hates doing most is overlook a significant piece of information when writing a story. I plead guilty as charged! In the story I had written for Friday's Telegram about the U.S. 36 Treasure Hunt, I overlooked the fact the event was sponsored by Norton Travel & Tourism. Slap me silly! Too, I also forgot to mention Karla Reed, the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce's director, was in charge of coordinating the map for the Internet. Two slaps! I offer no defense. I simply blew it! And Karla was not the person who tapped me on the shoulder. But I'm glad someone did so proper credit can be given.

—Tom Dreiling

The art of communication

Many important life skills are learned in school, while others are supposed to come naturally, yet can end up being the most challenging. For many people, communication is one of those. Today there are countless devices designed to improve communication between people (such as cell phones, voice mail, text messaging, e-mail, and instant messaging), yet it seems to be more difficult just getting our point across. In fact, some researchers say that 70 percent of all business communication fails to achieve its purpose. If the business world is having that much difficulty, what chance do the rest of us have?

There are some steps we can all take to improve our communication abilities and decrease misunderstandings or arguments. First, when speaking to someone, be aware of voice tone and intensity; we may not intend to come across in a negative way but the tone and intensity will quickly determine the outcome of the conversation. Any word or statement can come across as hostile, whiny, or annoying depending upon how we say it and how loud we say it. A voice message left on an answering machine might be surprising to some people if they were to listen. Although they may deny being irritated at the time they left the message, the message comes across as angry and de-

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Ken Loos

manding because of the tone and intensity of their voice.

Another major component of communication involves nonverbal cues, which includes eye contact, body posture, facial expressions, and hand gestures. A conversation can go well or can quickly deteriorate into conflict, depending on those factors. For example, making good eye contact, facing the person or moving closer encourages further discussion. This behavior shows that we are interested in actively listening to what they have to say.

On the other hand, rolling our eyes or turning away while someone is talking will certainly discourage further conversation, and may offend and result in hurt feelings. Keep in mind that over 90 percent of communication with others is nonverbal, and for people who are unaware of the conflicting messages their behavior conveys, this factor may be contributing to continuing misunderstandings and disagreements.

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This camp had something for everyone

I just spent the weekend at a sleep-away camp. It was a camp for grown-ups - all girls. Our church is part of a group of churches that use this camp and every year, about this time, there is a women's retreat held. Women from all over the state come. Some have been coming for thirty years or more. It's an annual reunion and a great getaway.

I have been going for several years, only missing every now and then. It's something I definitely look forward to, and attend, if possible.

The first year, I remember having to prop open the windows to get a little air circulating. I also remember needing a flashlight to make that early morning trip to the bathroom and shower house. But, every year we would find some improvements to the facility.

This year the dorms had been divided into 15-bed cabins with air conditioning and a toilet and shower in the rooms. How cool.

The bunk beds were still there and the mattresses still lumpy, but when you get as tired as we get at retreat, you could sleep on almost anything.

The first night is registration, settling in,

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



supper, a message and the highly-anticipated "talent" show. You will see normally reserved, dignified women don long, blonde wigs, snap bubble gum and create a character that will have you rolling in the aisle.

I recited my "50 Famous Parental Sayings," a great-grandmother played some tunes on her harmonica; a couple of ladies sang; there were skits; a violinist; and a woman who signed. A real variety show.

Some of what happens at retreat is just plain fun. This year the feature attraction was "sumo wrestling" with the huge, over-stuffed costumes. There were 40 and 50 year-old women bashing each other around.

But, what we're really there for is the spiritual retreat. Some of the lessons were factual and some were insightful. We cov-

ered topics like caring for elderly parents, being a submissive wife, understanding your personality traits and becoming mentors to younger women.

There is always a guest speaker and she was wonderful. Entertaining while thought-provoking. Good natured, too. Especially when one of the campers put a "squishy" toy mouse in her cabin Saturday night.

One of the "girls" is a notorious prankster and gets blamed for every pair of pajamas tied in knots; for every hidden mattress; and for every light turned out while you're in the shower.

After a late night of playing "Catch Phrase," I fumbled around in the dark trying to find the top of my sleeping bag, and not disturb my sleeping (and snoring, I might add) cabinmates. When I unzipped the bag I found everything I had brought with me stuffed inside. In my mind I thought, "This has Julie written all over it."

She adamantly denied it the next day until finally, the real culprit "fessed up". All I can say is, "Next year is coming, Janet. You better sleep with one eye open."

Suggestion: 'Be the change we wish to see'

My sister sent me an article by Mark McCormick of the *Wichita Eagle* from Sept. 16. In his column McCormick defended the profane tirade by KU football coach Mark Mangino which I referenced in my Sept. 18 column in *The Telegram*.

McCormick made some interesting points about sportsmanship and the "rudeness and crudeness" of our society. Yes, we do see it everywhere. McCormick states, "I can't exactly condone Mangino's language. I will say, though, that as nasty as it must have seemed to people unfamiliar with coachspeak, those of us who've been around coaches and locker rooms have probably all heard worse."

He ends his column by talking about the rude behavior we all see around us every day. "It's enough to make you cuss," he exclaims.

Yeah, it's annoying. But what if we all decided to take the high road? We aren't children. When did "She hit me first!" or "Everybody else does it," become justification.

In a recent sermon our minister pointed out that the way to redemption is to deny one's self. God loves us and He will provide. We ought to believe that and stop trying to get for ourselves. Just because we can have something doesn't mean we should. Just because we have the money to build and maintain an obscenely huge house or buy the latest gas guzzler off the assembly line, doesn't mean we shouldn't

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



think long and hard about the effect it may have on the environment and perhaps deny ourselves just a little.

Just because it might feel good at the moment to give someone a good cussing doesn't make it right.

Gandhi said "Be the change you wish to see in the world"

Or how about this little jewel? "Control your attitude or it will control you!"

In my everyday life I often forget to even think about what impact my actions may have on others. One recent Friday we made three trips to town to accomplish what could have been done in one. But we forgot — to get some cash, to go by and pay a bill. After all, it's only five miles one way. We live in America, land of the free, home of relatively cheap gasoline. Everyone else drives to Kearney every weekend to get toilet paper; at least I'm not like that! I'd feel guilty but my neighbors do it so why can't I?

Sometime back in the last century we decided it was bad for our self esteem to feel guilty about anything. So we started

handing out medals to everyone who played, win or lose. The worst thing in the world we decided was to feel regret. We became a society that did what it wanted and figured out a way to justify it later. As long as you don't hurt someone else it's okay. Then, as our minister said same Sunday, same sermon, that became, "If it hurts you; that is your problem."

We are entitled! We aren't going to apologize! We just feel too good about ourselves! However if you have offended me you better apologize right now and atone in the manner of my choosing.

Everyone ends up acting like they are two years old. I recently saw a bumper sticker, "Never do anything you wouldn't want to explain to the paramedics."

Mangino has the right to correct his players as he sees fit, but there is no denying this type of rude and crude behavior hurts society. I often want to explain myself when I realize I have hurt someone or been misunderstood, but I have come to realize it doesn't matter what my intent was. If I have hurt someone, I have hurt someone. If I have been misunderstood, I expressed myself badly. Don't say or do things you have to explain! The end result may be more than just embarrassing.

Say "I'm sorry," period. No amount of explaining can make up for doing the wrong thing.

If we want the world to be a better place we have to "Be the change we wish to see."

Remember: Thumbs Up and Letters to the Editor