

“I wish I’d said that!”

How to Talk Your Way
Out of Trouble
and Into Success



LINDA McCALLISTER, PhD

“I wish I’d said that!”

How to Talk Your Way Out of Trouble
and Into Success



LINDA MCCALLISTER, PH.D.

JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC.

New York • Chichester • Brisbane • Toronto • Singapore

This text is printed on acid-free paper.

Copyright © 1992, 1994 by Linda McCallister.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

All rights reserved. Published simultaneously in Canada.

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work beyond that permitted by Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act without the permission of the copyright owner is unlawful. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. *From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a Committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers.*

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:

McCallister, Linda.

I wish I'd said that: how to talk your way out of trouble and into success/by Linda McCallister.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-471-55551-7(cloth) ISBN 0-471-00857-5(paper)

1. Interpersonal communication. 2. Persuasion (Rhetoric)
3. Persuasion (Psychology) 4. Success—Psychological aspects.

I. Title.

BF637.C45M2 1992

153.6—dc20

92-7586

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6

Critical Acclaim for Linda McCallister's
***"I Wish I'd Said That!" How to Talk Your Way
Out of Trouble and Into Success***

"I Wish I'd Said That!" is . . . a rule book to help you play the game of business and of life in that most satisfying of modes: the winning mode."

Business First

"... [T]he content is certainly substantial—and valuable to anyone in business or dealing with difficult relationships. Her precepts, based on 10 years of observation and thousands of interviews (not to mention secondary sources), are straightforwardly presented; each of the six communicator styles—noble, Socratic, reflective, magistrate, candidate, senator—is described well, with easy-to-understand analogies, to Woody Allen, "The Golden Girls," George Bush, and the like, along with explanations of strengths and weaknesses, characteristics, sound, and how-to's of controlling that particular type of communicator. Her discussion of communicating in corporate situations is very specific, including details on negotiating salaries and raises, surviving meetings, and dealing with sensitive issues, among others."

Booklist

"In a work world in which you have to deal with people who may have communication styles as diverse as Lee Iacocca or Woody Allen, ***"I Wish I'd Said That!"*** demonstrates that how you communicate has everything to do with *who* you are trying to communicate with. After ten years of research and more than 10,000 interviews with workers, professionals and business students, author Linda McCallister has developed a unique *Communication Style Profile*, which measures the six major styles of communication: the Noble, Socratic, Reflective, Candidate, Magistrate, and Senator. This book is a primer on applying this knowledge to control the outcome of important interactions, and to persuade people in a positive manner."

Canadian Manager

"It's not so much what you say, but how you say it. We've all heard this homily again and again, but do we know what it means and how to use it? Linda McCallister does and explains it in a way that is direct, to the point and useful—especially to the business reader. I recommend the book highly. It's not just what she says, it's how she says it."

—Dr. Albert J. Bernstein
Author, *Dinosaur Brains* and
Neanderthals at Work

"If you want to avoid 'pododontia' (foot-in-mouth disease), be sure to read this book and follow Linda McCallister's excellent advice."

—Roger E. Axtell
Author, *Do's and Taboos Around the World*

"*'I Wish I'd Said That!'* has as its hallmark a rich variety of entertaining examples that serve to please as well as instruct."

—Dr. Curtis McCray
President
California State University, Long Beach

"Must reading for anyone concerned with people and results. The six styles cut across cultures and open a window to success in our fast paced global business environment."

—David Sun
President, Sun Microcomputers, Inc.

"*'I Wish I'd Said That!'* will enable you to create success working with others regardless of how their personalities and styles differ from your own."

—Christopher Hagerty
Author, *How to Manage Your Boss*

"Linda McCallister has captured the real pearls of verbal communication by identifying communication styles . . . we each fall into one of her categories. She helps the reader to understand how to use a most vital business skill and parlay it into success."

—Susan Bixler
President, The Professional Image
Author, *Professional Presence* and *The Professional Image*

P R E F A C E

There are six major styles of communication that exist in the world today, and *"I wish I'd said that!"* shows you how to identify and use these styles to influence others, solve problems, and get the results you want at work. You have *total control* over only one thing in your fast-paced, high-stress, global business environment—communication style. If you can control style, you can control the outcome of important interactions. This book shows you how to develop this control.

In his autobiography, Lee Iacocca said, "Motivation is everything . . . and the only way to motivate people is to communicate with them. . . . It's important to talk to people in their own language. If you do it well, they'll say, 'God, he said exactly what I was thinking.' And when they begin to respect you, they'll follow you to the death." Communication style is the language that exists within all languages, and *"I wish I'd said that!"* shows you how to use style to get others to "follow you to the death."

This book will show you how to deal with people who share Mr. Iacocca's communication style—in my classification scheme, he is a Nobel communicator—and how to talk successfully with people who sound like Woody Allen, George Bush, Gloria Steinem, Ronald Reagan, Oprah Winfrey, Geraldo Rivera, Margaret Thatcher, Jesse Jackson, or Jimmy Carter. Each of these people represents a type of communicator; each speaks a unique language within our English language. This book explains how to talk that language and get the results you want at work—or anywhere else.

If you have ever said, "I wish I'd said what I was really thinking," or "I probably shouldn't have said that," or "I said too much; he stopped listening halfway through my pitch," then this book is for you. It is for

anyone who would like—once and for all—to feel comfortable and in command when talking with others.

“I wish I’d said that!” shows you how to use style to get ahead and survive in modern, complex organizations. After reading this book, you should be able to forecast what is likely to happen in a particular situation, and ultimately you should be able to control the results of important interactions.

Over ten years, I interviewed more than 10,000 workers, professionals, and business students in an effort to develop my unique and original Communication Style Profile, which measures the six major styles of communication; I call them the Noble, Socratic, Reflective, Candidate, Magistrate, and Senator. These styles form the Communication Kaleidoscope, which turns the very complex process of communication into a simple and easy-to-understand skill that can be used to guide your professional destiny.

The Communication Style Profile Test (contained in the Appendix) is a series of sixty questions that measure how you communicate. This is important because people do not react to *what* you say; instead, they react to *how* you say what you say. Communication success is directly linked to the other person’s expectations; the other person expects you to sound just like he or she sounds. You can learn to identify other people’s expectations, how to satisfy those expectations, and how to control the outcome of any conversation. If you are attempting to get ahead—or even just survive—in the modern organization, it is crucial that you be able to control what happens in the one-on-one or group conversation. I’ve provided you with an easy method for gaining this control.

This is not a passive book! Take an active role in the creation and analysis of scenarios that demonstrate what it sounds like when you talk your way into or out of trouble. Through the scenarios, you will see how easy it is to create the sounds of success with many different types of people. I present you with a scenario and ask you to respond. Then I show you how your response will cause or eliminate trouble. The scenarios reveal why one style will not work with all people, and they demonstrate

how the Communication Kaleidoscope can be used to create styles that will work with different types of people. I think you will find these scenarios interesting, stimulating, and fun too.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part One, you learn about style, how it works, and how it can be used to control the outcome of interactions. Throughout the book, I use real stories from real people to illustrate how style can be manipulated to create moments of success.

Knowing about style, however, isn't enough. In Part Two, the six styles of the Communication Kaleidoscope are explored, and you learn how to deal with each type of communicator. Once acquainted with the six styles, you will find yourself saying, "Oh my gosh, I do that" or "My boss does that, and it drives me crazy!"

In Part Three, you learn how Communication Style works within the context of a large or small organization, and you learn how to use the Communication Kaleidoscope to get others to willingly do what you want them to do.

The talking scenarios I use throughout the book center on some of the most difficult and often humorous situations we face in our daily lives. They illustrate how communication style can be used as a strategy for dealing with the difficult people who create stress and problems in professional relationships. They reveal how you can use style to keep from destroying your career, and they show you why some people love, and others hate, the way you talk. The scenarios reveal how you can control your own destiny and get the things you want in life without generating resentment or anger.

Communication style is a skill. It is not something you are born with, and it is not something you must accept as fate. You can't do anything about your astrological sign, but you can do something about how you communicate. "*I wish I'd said that!*" shows you what to do and how you can do it better.

Recently I was conducting a seminar based on this book. A middle-aged executive sitting in the first row kept shaking his head and rubbing his brow as I delivered what I thought was a humorous description of the

Preface

six types of communicators. Throughout the day, he participated in the exercises, but he remained pensive and somewhat distant. At the end of the day, he approached me, looked me in the eye, and in his quiet Noble style simply said, "Thank you. I think you've saved my marriage." He turned and walked out of the room.

He didn't need to say anything more; I knew what he meant. Organizational communication is my area of expertise, but my communication style research applies to personal as well as professional relationships. As you read this book, you will discover that your dominant style of communication is shaped by the work you do, and how you talk at work tends to be how you talk at home. Thus, the same things that irritate or impress your colleagues may irritate or impress your mate. So whether you are looking to improve your marriage or your career, you will find "*I wish I'd said that!*" helpful.

We each view the world through a unique set of glasses. Language helps us define, but communication style helps us interpret the world we see. The Communication Kaleidoscope provides a common framework for interpreting many different worlds.

LINDA MCCALLISTER

Palm Springs, California

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

It is not possible for me to recognize here everyone who contributed to this project. Over a twelve-year period, thousands of students, workers, managers, professionals, and executives have taken the various versions of my Communication Style Profile test while attending my classes and seminars. Their comments, stories, and suggestions provide the foundation for this book. I am eternally grateful to my students, especially Sharon Eshett, Michael Deforest, Jeff Kawakubo, and Cathy Crowell, for teaching me how to hear communication style.

I am happy to recognize my friend and mentor, Professor Emeritus W. Charles Redding. As my doctoral adviser, Charles helped me begin my journey into the nebulous world of communication style. He kept the nay-sayers at a distance and allowed me to blaze a trail through uncharted territory. He is the *ne plus ultra* Socratic, but I love him anyway. I owe special thanks to Ann Redding for her kindness, for keeping Charles on time, and for making him answer my telephone calls during those horrible final days of the dissertation process.

To Teri Thompson and Lou Cusella, I offer my undying love. They stood by me and supported me through the darkest and most painful moments of my life. They continue to be my role models.

This book would not exist without Susan Grode, Nancy Stauffer, and John Mahaney. Susan, my attorney, believed in me when no one else did and introduced me to Nancy Stauffer, the world's best agent. Nancy is critical, she is persistent, she is demanding, she is dedicated, she is loyal, she is Noble, and I love her for all this and more. John is my editor, and the person who showed me how to make my styles come alive. His Reflective touch gave a soft ambience to my Noble tones, and his Noble comments inspired me to work harder than I intended.

Acknowledgments

I am fortunate to have many dear friends. Their encouraging words helped me rise above my own self-doubts, and their supportive actions helped me endure the lonely life of a writer. I am especially thankful to and proud to know Marcy L. Krugel, Gwen Zinchook Ahearn, Kay Alexander, Bobby and Elle Patton, Helena Hacker, Jimmy and Juddi Trent, Bob and Teri Putz, Michael Kuras, LaVern Lindsey, John Beljan, Janet Roncelli, Vala Stults, Ann Marie Peacock, Linda and Bill Gronski, and my dearest comrade, Barbara Crutchfield George.

I am even more fortunate to have family members who serve as my cheerleaders. Nina and Carl Barron, Rita Randall, Paula Skerchock, Jim McCallister, Cindy and Joe Golden, Margaret and Jim Sisson, Pat and Harry Balk, and, my mom, Louise Ford McCallister, have always been there to help me when I have stumbled along the way.

Finally, I am blessed to have two wonderful sons who serve as the lights of my life. Thank you, Frankie and Jason, for your unconditional love and devotion.

L. M.

C O N T E N T S

PART ONE: WHAT IS STYLE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

CHAPTER 1 I Wish I Hadn't Said That! 3

How to Talk Your Way Out of Trouble, 9

How to Talk Your Way Into Success, 12

How to Make Things Happen in Your Life, 19

CHAPTER 2 The Six Styles of Communication 22

The Dominant Styles, 24

The Noble: Clint, Rambo, Joan, and Arnold, 25

The Socratic: Reagan and Cosby, 27

The Reflective: Woody, Mia, Jimmy, and Arsenio, 29

The Blended Styles, 31

The Magistrate: Geraldo, Dixie, and Muhammad Ali, 32

The Candidate: Betty White and Jimmy Stewart, 34

The Dual Style, 39

The Senator: George Bush and Blanche Devereaux, 39

How to Talk Almost Anyone Into Doing Almost Anything, 43

PART TWO: HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN COMMUNICATION KALEIDOSCOPE

CHAPTER 3 The Noble: Truth in Action 49

The Noble Sound, 49

Tell It Like It Is! 49

I Know, Therefore You Should Know, 52

<i>Eliminate the Chitchat</i> , 53	
<i>Be Concise and Say It Quickly!</i> 54	
<i>Focus, Focus, Focus</i> , 55	
<i>Hit-and-Run Missions</i> , 57	
<i>No Gray Areas</i> , 57	
<i>You Should, You Must, You Will</i> , 58	
<i>Actions Speak Louder Than Words</i> , 58	
<i>Be Like Me</i> , 60	
<i>Them's Fightin' Words</i> , 60	
<i>Information Underload</i> , 60	
How to Get the Noble to Do What You Want, 62	
<i>Noble Strengths</i> , 65	
<i>Noble Weaknesses</i> , 65	
<i>Controlling the Noble</i> , 66	
How Nobles Can Get Others to Do What They Want, 70	
<i>Controlling the Socratic</i> , 70	
<i>Controlling the Reflective</i> , 73	

CHAPTER 4 The Socratic: Thoughts That Breathe, Words That Burn

76

The Socratic Sound, 76	
<i>Talk, Talk, and More Talk</i> , 79	
<i>Never Leave a Detail Unexplored</i> , 79	
<i>The Ruling Hand of Socrates</i> , 80	
<i>You Should, You Must, You Definitely Will!</i> 81	
<i>Presenting the Prima Facie Case</i> , 82	
<i>Talking in Footnotes</i> , 83	
<i>Stories, Reviews, and Parenthetical Asides</i> , 84	
<i>Delivering the Monologue</i> , 85	
<i>If, Then, Therefore We Should</i> , 87	
<i>Winston Churchill Revisited</i> , 87	
<i>Information Overload</i> , 88	
How to Get the Socratic to Do What You Want, 89	
<i>Socratic Strengths</i> , 90	
<i>Socratic Weaknesses</i> , 90	

How Socratics Can Get Others to Do What They Want, 96

Controlling the Noble, 97

Controlling the Reflective, 101

**CHAPTER 5 The Reflective: The Sweeter
 Banquet of the Mind**

104

The Reflective Sound, 104

Always Polite, Warm, and Supportive, 105

The Little White Lie, 105

It Is Better to Say Nothing, 106

Reflect Upon It a While, 107

Let's Share Feelings, 107

Rogarian Response Techniques, 108

Qualify Everything, 109

I'm Listening, 111

Patience Not Progress, 111

Speak Softly and Don't Carry a Big Stick, 112

I Wish I Had Said What I Really Thought, 114

The Credibility Gap, 114

How to Get Reflectives to Do What You Want, 116

Reflective Strengths, 118

Reflective Weaknesses, 118

How Reflectives Can Get Others to Do What They Want, 122

Controlling the Noble, 127

Controlling the Socratic, 128

**CHAPTER 6 The Magistrate: The Good, the Bad,
 and the Really Ugly**

129

The Magistrate Sound, 129

Power Personified, 130

Tell It Like It Is and in Great Detail, 131

Win at All Cost, 136

Do as I Say, Not as I Do, 138

The Peacock Strut, 138

The Great Orator, 140

The Double-edged Sword, 142

xviii

How to Get Senators to Do What You Want, 178
Senator Strengths, 179
Senator Weaknesses, 179
 How Senators Can Get Others to Do What They Want, 181

PART THREE: HOW TO USE STYLE TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE AND INTO SUCCESS

CHAPTER 9	Gaining Power without Generating Resentment	185
The Link Between Communication Style and Management Style, 185		
Can an Organization Have Style? 188		
How to Identify the Power Communicators, 191		
Using Communication Style to Gain Power and Control Those Who Would Stab You in the Back, 193		
Using Style to Create a Customer Service Model Inside the Organization, 199		
CHAPTER 10	Style, Gender, and the Organization	203
She's a Bitch, He's a Leader, 205		
He's a Wimp, She's a Leader, 206		
Dealing with Male Expectations, 212		
Dealing with Female Expectations, 214		
Male and Female Managers of the Twenty-first Century: Will There Be a Difference? 215		
CHAPTER 11	Talking with Difficult People	217
The One-on-One Interaction: It Can Make or Break Your Career, 217		
Talking with Your Boss, Colleagues, Subordinates, and Clients: Is There a Difference? 219		

Talking with the Chronic Complainer, 224	
Talking with Emotional People, 229	
Talking with the Explosive Person, 232	
Using Style to Conduct an Effective Discipline Interview, 235	
CHAPTER 12 Using Style to Climb the Corporate Ladder	242
Negotiating Salary in a Job Interview, 242	
How to Negotiate a Raise, 246	
How to Gain Recognition and Get Promotions, 247	
Making the Labor-Management Partnership Work, 257	
CHAPTER 13 Surviving the Group Meeting	263
Groups, Horses, Camels, and Two Ships Passing in the Night, 263	
Dealing with Frustrating People in Group Meetings, 267	
But I Thought You Said . . . , 270	
We're Saying the Same Thing . . . , 270	
How to Avoid Destructive Argumentation, 271	
Developing Strategies for Success in the Group Meeting, 273	
CHAPTER 14 Talking about Sensitive Issues	276
Personal Hygiene: Common Problem, Uncommon Solutions, 276	
Good Employee, Bad Habit: What Do You Say? 283	
How to Motivate Someone after Denying His or Her Request for a Promotion or Raise, 285	
How to Fire an Employee without Creating Hostility, 287	
How to Resign without Burning Bridges, 291	
Allocating Office Space: A Dirty Job, But Someone Has to Do It, 293	
EPILOGUE I'm Glad I Said That!	295
APPENDIX Communication Style Profile	297
INDEX	307