5 Integrity-first Communication Strategies

1. Lead with Empathy, Not Agenda

If you want to build trust quickly, start by putting empathy before agenda. Empathy transforms communication from transactional to transformational. It shows that you're invested not just in outcomes, but in people. And that simple shift makes your influence infinitely more powerful.

2. Master Level 5 Listening

- **Level 1: Ignoring**

You hear the words but don't actually register the meaning. This is surface-level "hearing," not listening.

- **Level 2: Pretend Listening**

You're listening enough to appear polite but not enough to engage meaningfully.

- **Level 3: Selective Listening**

You're listening for what's relevant to you. You filter out what doesn't serve your goal or agenda, and you might interrupt or steer the conversation in your direction.

- **Level 4: Active Listening**

You're genuinely trying to understand the other person. You're focused, you reflect back what you hear, and you ask clarifying questions.

- **Level 5: Empathic (Heart-Level) Listening**

You tune into tone, body language, energy, and emotion. You're seeking to understand why the person feels what they feel, not just what they're saying.

3. Be Transparent in Every Interaction

Integrity thrives in transparency. When you're open about your intentions, goals, and limitations, people relax. Transparency removes the need for guesswork. It builds a foundation where trust can flourish naturally. Transparency also means being willing to admit when you don't know something.

4. Use Influence for Collaboration, Not Control

One of the biggest misconceptions about influence is that it's about control, getting people to do what you want. In reality, the most effective influence is collaborative. It's about aligning your goals with others in a way that benefits everyone.

5. Honor Your Word. Every Time.

When you honor your word, even in small commitments, people learn they can rely on you. That reliability creates momentum. Each fulfilled promise strengthens your influence, not because of what you say, but because of who you are.

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