



GERATH & CO.



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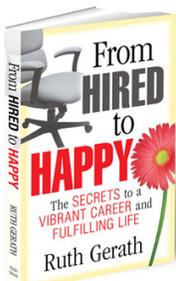
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Ruth Gerath has consulted to companies from Fortune 10s to start-ups on issues from client engagement to leadership and professional development. She is a consultant, coach, speaker and the author of the upcoming book:



6 Professional Skills That Will Set You Apart

You are smart and motivated. But it takes more than that to be successful at work and in life. Here are six skills that everyone, at any level, can learn and benefit from.

Listen Carefully. This is the most important skill you can develop. It is where communication starts.

Playback. Paraphrase back what you've heard. You can say something like, "I heard you say (fill in here). Did I get that right?" This does two important things: 1) it shows that you've been listening carefully (everyone likes to be heard), and 2) it allows for clarification, which prevents incorrect expectations and wasted energy.

Inform. Create a schedule and a means for keeping the right people informed. Less is more. Keep the updates concise and consistent, and avoid personalizing things. Ask yourself *who needs to know what by when?* You may need to send an update daily to some people but weekly or even monthly to others.

Give Credit. Make a habit of giving credit to people for their work. Take the time to let someone know that you appreciate their input or that they gave a great presentation. Mention publicly that a colleague or teammate made an important contribution. Make a habit of this and you will build a strong network of people who will gladly help you when you need it.

Take Responsibility. Own your actions and the results. No excuses. No blame shifting. No whining.

Breathe. When you get tense your breath becomes shallow, which increases stress. Steady breathing relaxes the body and brings oxygen to the brain, which allows you to think more clearly. You can calm yourself by breathing in through your nose and letting your belly and lungs expand. Breathe out slowly and steadily.

Practice these six skills and you become a strong communicator, be able to set and manage expectations with others, build respectful and trusting relationships, and stay clear headed under stress.

