

## TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT

Being social animals, human beings have strong need to connectivity and belonging. Studies of adult development on happiness and satisfaction revealed that the most important thing that really matters in life is our relationship with other people. Thus, positive social relationships are key components of happiness and well-being, and they ought to be nurtured. According to the contemporary researches, healthy communication is the key part of all relationships and is an essential part of any positive social interaction. It is also found out that positive communication contributes to a life that is pleasant, engaged, relationally rich, meaningful and filled with feelings of achievement. Like any other art, positive communication can be enacted in our daily lives in various forms and transform our interpersonal relationships if learned and practiced properly. Irrespective of its virtues, positive communication remains under-researched. Therefore, the topic warrants special attention. Thus, in this paper, the roles of positive communication in transforming social interactions were discussed. It was also looked into the bases by which positive communication can be enacted in our daily lives by reviewing the theoretical claims and speculations on the basis of real-life situations.

**Keywords:** Positive Communication, Healthy Relationships, Social Interactions, Communication Art, Happiness

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## INTRODUCTION

Human beings have strong need to connectivity and belonging because they are social creatures. To enjoy life and lead a happy life, we must have healthy relationships with people around us. It seems that people commonly want to own wealth and fame to be happy in life. On contrary, studies show that positive social interaction and healthy relationships are the most important elements that keep human beings happy and healthy as they go through life. According to Vaillant, the director of Harvard Grant Study (an 80-year-old study on adult development), the only thing that really matters in life is our relationships with other people as good relationships keep us healthy and happy (Vaillant, 2012). Relationships are important for us not only because we each depend on one another and like company, but because simply to exist as a normal human being requires interaction with other people. People who live the happiest life are those who leaned to have good relationships with family, friends, neighbors and colleagues. This is why the new scholarship in this regard affirms that positive social interactions increase our subjective well-being and provide greater life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, 2008). Similarly, Seligman (2002) and Fredrickson & Joiner (2002) assert that nurturing social relationships augment happiness because spending time with friends or colleagues builds positive emotions, a key component of happiness. However, irrespective of the fact that social relationships are vital for a happy and fulfilling life, unfortunately, we often downplay it; failing to leave adequate time to work on developing and maintaining these social ties.

A crucial building block of positive social interaction is good communication. Good communication is an essential part of all relationships and is an important part of any healthy partnership. Although it is true all relationships have ebbs and flows, a healthy communication style can make it easier to deal with conflict, and promote a stronger and healthier partnership. On the other hand, lack of healthy communication can result in family separation, employees work resignation, stress, spouses divorce, poor academic achievement, political turmoil and the like. In most cases, even if we acknowledge the importance of communication in our interpersonal interactions, still, we do not know what exactly it is and how we can use good communication in our relationships.

Even though it is generally accepted that positive communication is an alluring phenomenon for positive social interaction and healthy relationships, it has not been given due attention. Within the discipline of communication, scholars have long accentuated on the dysfunction of human communication rather than positive side of it. Problems related with communication (some aspects of the dark side such as the dysfunctional, distorted, distressing, and destructive aspects of human behavior) have been studied by communication scholars for several decades and have been discussed by psychodynamic psychologists for even more ( Arkadyevna, 2014, Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

Thus, based on the above mentioned thought, “the good life is built with good relationships”, studying the role of the positive communication in building good relationships would be of paramount relevance, because how to develop these good relationships is the most important issue. Indeed, we daily communicate with people around us; but, how we communicate with each other matters greatly. Scholars claim that positive communication is seemingly a solution to these problems. With the aim of creating mutual understanding and satisfying for all the parties involved, positive communication is an interaction based on positive attitude. Our identity, our friendships, our families, and our cultures are the production of how we speak to one another. Our words affect our hopes and dreams, as well as those of our children (Mirivel, 2014). Positive communication is constructive, effective, supportive and colored with good emotions, in order for us to be able to develop those healthy relationships. In the outlook of

positive communication, a mere exchange of information or message does not make up a communication; rather, there must be empathy, good intention and positive interpretation in the interlocutions. In the following subtopics, the notion of positive communication, its importance, its evolution and how it works out will be discussed separately.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Contemporarily, we live in a world where negativity prevails due to different factors such as opposing political stands, incompatible values, intolerance against freedom of expression and growing ideological differentiation (Arkadyevna, 2014). The positive side of communication was played down as communication scholars have long focused on the challenging elements of communication. On the media, it is very common to experience hate speech, violence, fake news, sexism, racism, sexual harassment and other types of offensive messages. It is possible to note such occurrences in public discourses especially in the digital age and it goes sky-high on the social network sites (like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. Today, it is very common to see people with different opinions and attitudes using derogatory language and curse words against each other, displaying intolerance towards their counterparts' views and passionately looking for negative facts to defame their opponents instead of trying to understanding each other by offering positive alternatives and sharing mutual concern. Spreading such negative messages has an adverse effect on our joint public sphere (Velázquez & Pulido, 2019). Latest developments in society reveal that people are besieged with this negativity and are dreadfully looking for something positive to lean on. Thus, for the aforementioned reasons, positive communication warrants an accentuation.

Positive communication is a kind of communication that is best for our social interaction, providing us with well-being, happiness, and awareness for common good. It is a new branch of communication science which strives to ensure for us the appliance of the healthy, productive and meaningful relationships through constructive, effective, supportive and emotional interaction aimed at mutual understanding and satisfying for all the parties involved (Arkadyevna, 2014). Because it triggers an interaction with positive attitude and mutual understanding that is pleasing for all the parties involved, positive communication enhances our relationships thereby creating happiness and pleasure. The pro-social, ethical, spiritual, and positive character qualities which are found in positive interpersonal communication are believed to benefit relationships by promoting eudemonic happiness (Socha & Pitts, 2012). Thus, if we keep practicing positive communication, it will enhance the quality of our relationships and will create positive social interactions. By another token, positive communication sheds light on the sprit and quality of our interconnection. In addition to these significances of positive communication mentioned above, Mirivel (2014) states a range of tangible and practical outcomes that learning to communicate positively has. If we learn and practice positive communication, it can foster our happiness and help us cope with stress and adversity, in addition to improving our physical and psychological health. In a nutshell, positive communication has positive impact in different aspects of our life from friendship to romantic relationships, and to family life (Pitts and Socha, 2013). Last but not least, if the mass media and the social media is handled with responsibility focusing on the positive communication principles, it is possible to create positive media environment where the abovementioned problems related with media like fake news, hate speech, and other offensive messages could be avoided and secured common public sphere with a better understating could be created (Velázquez & Pulido, 2019).

## THE AIM OF THE STUDY

As it has been stated earlier, the field of communication has long plaid down the positive perspective of human communication and accentuated the challenging side of it for longer period of time. It is only very recently, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that field of positive communication has gained attention. The few studies conducted so far in this area disclosed that positive communication plays a great role in building healthy relationships by promoting both personal and relational happiness and wellbeing. It is assumed that the prevailing negativity in the social media, mainstream media and in our daily life interactions could be solved through positive communication. However, despite its paramount significance, it is very difficult to easily find published scientific works on the field of positive communication. Though it can be said that there is a promising start, still there is huge scarcity in the field and consequently, there is a dire need to undertake thorough researches in the area of positive interpersonal communication. Methodologically, this article is a theoretical type of research which uses the literature search to introduce the concept of positive communication and how it can be enacted in our daily social interactions. Therefore, this paper aims to introduce some of the findings of the major works done in the area recently by the prominent scholars in positive communication and the other related fields like positive psychology with the intention of introducing the already available literature (research findings) and recommending future research directions.

## EVOLUTION OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

The relationships we have with people around us matter and being able to create warm connection is a curtail issue to lead a happy and fulfilling life. According to Mirivel (2014), one of the prominent scholars in the field of positive communication, communication is the master key for creating relationships and the way we communicate shapes our relationship with others. If our communication is positive and constructive, then, our relationships would also be positive and healthy. But, if our communication is negative or not productive that would lead to have unhealthy and cold relationships. When we say there is a “close/warm” or “cold” relationships among people, this implies what sort of communication is there among them. However, it takes to exert an effort and make practice to bring about these warm relationships. Thus, how we communicate with people around us will nurture the nature of our relationships, be it in the family, neighborhood, at the work or the lager society. If we keep practicing positive communication, it will enhance the quality of our relationships and will create positive social interactions. By another token, positive communication elucidates the dynamics and excellence of our interactivity. Because communication scholars have long focused on the problematic nature of human interaction and its dark side, unluckily, the positive side has not been well accentuated until very recently and is under-researched. More focus was given to understanding the communication challenges that people face in relationships like the nature of hurtful messages, aggression, or abuse, the nature of revenge (Mirivel, 2014, Arkadyevna, 2014 and Socha & Beck, 2015).

The evolution of positive communication is related with the emergence of positive psychology, which claims that the positive perspectives and strengths should be accentuated as opposed to the negative and weaknesses. According to the positive communication pioneer, Thomas Socha, positive psychology has paved the way for the development of positive perspective of communication. Following the major movement in psychology led by Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, and others) that urged psychologists to move beyond the exclusive study of negative perspectives (such as mental illness, stress, anxiety, depression etc.) to those that are working, functioning and empowering, the communication scholars also came to conclude that the field psychology and communication have much in

common with regards to benefiting from “positive” perspective. Socha & beck (2015) argue that the interest in the new branch (positive communication) has continued to increase since 2009 with the vigorous development of positive communication publications and classes at universities.

## DEFINING POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Positive communication is a new branch of communication science which strives to ensure for us the appliance of the healthy, productive and meaningful relationships through constructive, effective, supportive and emotional interaction intended for shared understanding and pleasing all the interlocutors involved (Arkadyevna, 2014). Positive communication is an important part of our communication skills and has an enormous impact on our lives. It has the power to renovate even negative feelings into positive ones. It also encourages the creation of positive impressions which help us to denounce our negative impulses. Similarly, positive communication is any kind of communication that brings forth positive response and actions from the intended audience (Shine team, 2014). Arkadyevna (2014) defined positive communication as human interaction that is made based on positive emotions, with the aim of mutual understanding and satisfying for all the parties involved.

In his groundbreaking textbook “*The Art of Positive Communication: Theory and Practice*”, Mirivel (2014) defines positive communication as “verbal and nonverbal messages that function positively in the course of human interaction.” (p.10). He also proposes that practicing positive communication will help us grow as a person, improves the quality of the relationships in our life, and cultivates communication as a social practice. On the contrary to the old approach which focused on the dark side of communication or sought to understand communication challenges, this new branch of communication (positive communication) focuses on the positive and bright side of interpersonal communication (a movement first emerged as positive psychology). It focuses on such works as the nature of personal happiness and excellence, compassion, courage, forgiveness, importance of intimacy and supportive communication. Mirivel asserts that positive communication is an art for life time and that both scholars and students can benefit from understanding communication as verbal (non-verbal) art. Like any other art that can be enacted though practice, such as drawing, sculpting, music, or painting, positive communication is also an art that requires mastering theory and practices.

## CONSTITUENT FEATURES OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Positive communication is a multifaceted set of multiple variables. It is also an art (not a natural mode of human behavior). Due to these factors practicing positive communication requires a conscious effort. Like any other art, it takes to understand the underlying theoretical knowledge (its characteristics) and then applying the theory into practice in one’s daily life. Thus, identifying its constituent features would help to practice and develop our positive communication skills. Explaining how greetings, asking questions and disclosing personal information can extend our relationships and strengthen our bonds with each other, Mirivel asserts that positive communication is an art that can be learned. It is a creative art through which we can inspire our relationships and co-construct our worlds. In his book “*The Art of Positive Communication*”, Mirivel (2014) introduces seven behaviors that include positive communication. These seven behaviors are: “greeting, asking, complimenting, disclosing, encouraging, listening, and inspiring” (p. 7). According to him, these behaviors “exemplify” (p. 7) positive communication.

Mirivel also developed a new model for positive communication out of these seven behaviors arguing that they inspire and influence positive communicative outcomes. He writes: “These

principles and their related positive communication behavior, offer a guide for understanding how positive communication functions in human interaction” (p.9). The seven behaviors are taken as core principles of positive communication and describe the nature of positive communication and are illustrated by Mirivel as follows:

1. Greeting creates contact
2. Asking discovers the unknown
3. Complementing affects the development of self
4. Disclosing deepens relationships
5. Encouraging gives support
6. Listening transcends human separateness and
7. Inspiring influences others.

Mirivel (2014) further argues that the practice of positive communication through these principles can be enacted into different contexts (like interpersonal, organizational/leadership, health) making the development of these communication skills even more imperative. As to him, if positive communication is well practiced in all our interactions, it would contribute to a happy life that is pleasant, engaged and relationally rich. Even though it is meant for a textbook, Mirivel’s model of positive communication can be taken as an outward-looking framework and can be potentially beneficial for future researches (Socha & Beck, 2015).

Other scholars have also pointed out similar components of positive communication which almost coincides with that of (Mirivel, 2014). For example, according to Arkadyevna (2014), the components of positive communication are positive intentions, initiative, adaptation to the interlocutor, empathic listening and social support.



Figure 1: Model of positive communication Source: Mirivel (2014)

## FORMS OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Positive communication has various forms. So it can be enacted in our daily lives in different ways. This can be done in intrapersonal and interpersonal sort of our communications. Some of the most important forms of positive communication include: *communication savoring*, *communicating forgiveness*, *peak communication*, *memorable messages*, *communication excellence*, *accentuating the positive* and so on. Below, the succinct explanation of these forms of positive communication is discussed briefly.

**Savoring** is a taxonomy well known in the field of positive psychology, and it is described as one's capacity to recognize and appreciate pleasant experiences in life. Lately, it is also being studied by positive communication and language scholars. After studying different features of savoring from positive communication and language as well as social psychology theoretical perspectives, Pitts came up with the following operational definition of communication savoring: "The process of mindfully attending to pleasurable or meaningful social interaction in real, remembered, or anticipated/imagined encounters and enhancing or prolonging the positive affect" (Pitts, 2018:254). Pitts (2019) found out that it is possible to experience communication savoring at different moments with exceptional positive emotions. She tried to identify 7 types of communication that people tend to savor: *aesthetic*, *communication presence*, *nonverbal communication*, *recognition and acknowledgement*, *relational communication*, *extraordinary communication* and *implicitly shared communication*. According to Bryant & Veroff (2007) savoring does not happen under conditions of (negative) cognitive overload such as anxiety, depression, stress and negative emotions. Thus, communication savoring is the moment that we can experience only when we are happy and that is why the scholars argue that it can enhance the quality of our life by elongating our happiness and creating pleasure beyond pleasure. Practicing the positive emotions through savoring can increase peoples' acceptance and expand their comfort zone (Seligman, 2002; Fredrickson, 2001 and Pitts, 2019).

**Communicating forgiveness** is the other form in which we can practice positive communication. Given different names such as pray or spiritual communication, forgiveness is accentuated in positive communication because it has a paramount significance in healing conflicts in romantic relationships, dysfunctional patterns of family communication, and dubious work relationships. Studies show that learning and practicing forgiveness has a lot of advantages to reconcile with oneself and overcome organizational conflicts, to solve religious conflict, school shootings, workplace violence, high divorce rates and stressed-out families (Waldron & Kelley, 2008) as well as to increase our pleasure and happiness (Seligman, 2002). Forgiveness is found to be a crucial relationship alternative to animosity, revenge, and disenchant. Waldron & Kelley (2008) describe forgiveness as "a means by which distressed partners can negotiate improvements in relational justice, create a renewed sense of optimism and well-being, and potentially recover lost intimacy and trust" (p. 6). They also showed that the notion of forgiveness is mainly interrelated with religiosity and that various major religions and their revelations/scriptures preach forgiveness to their followers particularly the 3 Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

**Peak Communication** is one of the "new" and essential areas of positive communication (Socha & Beck, 2015). According to Gordon (1985), "Peak communication refers to our "greatest moments" in interpersonal communication, our moments of highest mutual understanding, happiness and fulfillment deriving from the process of communicating with other human beings" (p. 825). Thus, according to Gordon and Dulaney (1982), when there is low mutual understanding in interpersonal communication, that would adversely influence the happiness and fulfillment rate of the communicators. And, they call this as "negative

communication experiences” (p. 8). These are the moments that people don't want to recall after it has already occurred. Gordon and Dulaney (1982) drew from their research findings that there are six components of peak communication experiences. These are: loving acceptance, open-minded insight, spontaneity, pleasant fear, absorption, and self - detachment. They also found out that there is gender difference in peak communication experiences; women experience significantly higher emotions (p.1).

**Memorable message** is also another communication feature that can be described as positive communication. According to Knapp, Stohl, & Reardon (1981) cited in Pitts (2019), a “memorable message” is a form of communication in which a person recalls a profound positive moments for a long period of time as having an important influence on his or her life. Though not all, memorable messages function as positive affect and create positive emotions for the individuals letting them to savor the moments even if the messages were exchanged in the past. Pitts (2019), in her study on savoring communication, found out that “memorable messages” are distinct forms of positive communication that can augment the quality of our social interaction.

**Accentuating the positive** (positive words/messages/language) is another form in which we can practice positive communication. There is always benefit that can be found in a tragedy. We can do this in storytelling, reporting news on a TV, even in our day-to-day communications. In her groundbreaking book *Broadcasting Happiness*, Geilan (2015) argues that emphasizing on the positive side of an event can create positive environment in the media. For example, when a reporter reports an event of natural or manmade disasters (like tsunami or terrorist attack), it is possible to focus on the positive side without concealing or hiding the negative. Most of the news we get on media today incline to the negative promoting hatred, revenge and hostility. For example, when reporting about tsunami, a reporter could focus how people are empathetic towards the victims, how supportive they are to let the victims survive, how the life savors are sacrificing their lives to rescue the vulnerable and perhaps how the charity organizations and governments are cooperating to minimize the risks as much as possible. In such way, it is quite possible to shift the negative oriented media environment into positive and promising environment. If both the media managers as well as their consumers, be it traditional media or the new media, act responsibly and accentuate the positive, it would be possible to create peaceful world where there is no hate and antagonism (Michelle Geilan, 2015). We can also accentuate the positive by choosing positive words/message over the negative and by avoiding the negations even in our day-to-day interactions. We can also use “I statement” instead of “you statement”. Using such positive expressions would make our conversations more encouraging and would enhance healthy relationships.

**Communication Excellence** - In a simplest form, communication excellence is communication at its best or how good can communication get. One indication for communication excellence is when we communicate with character or good ethics during our interactions in the interpersonal relationships. Scholars argue that this particular component of positive communication, which is communication excellence or embodying virtues in interpersonal communication, is played down for the most part (Mirivel, 2012). Mirivel argues that communication excellence is the art of speaking and acting ethically that is guided by virtuous activities. Depending on this argument, he proposes 5 virtues that can be enacted through communication. These are: *gentleness, generosity, courage, justice and compassion* (Mirivel, 2012:58).



## HOW TO ENACT POSITIVE COMMUNICATION IN OUR DAILY LIVES?

In our daily lives, we make social interactions in different situations. To make our relationships productive and healthy, we have to make our communication positive and meaningful. It is possible to improve communication, reduce conflict and defensiveness in others using positive language. Similarly, it is possible to soften even the unpleasant news and its impact through positive language. Thus, the purpose of this article is to show ways we can communicate in a more positive way that is more likely to elicit cooperation rather than argument or confrontation in our daily social interactions whether we are communicating within the family (children-parents relationships), within an organization/business (clients/customers relationships), within academic settings (student-teacher relationships) or other forms of relationships to project a helpful, positive image rather than a destructive negative one.

Due to the sensitive causes of communication conflicts, the tendency of using negative languages and messages prevail in the society. Hence, it is common to observe unhealthy communications and dysfunctional relationships. Instead of healthy relationships and positive communications (like love, forgiveness, praising, complementing, etc.), the negative and dark side of communication (such as communicating hate, blaming, condemning, criticizing, impoliteness, etc.) is widespread. The consequences of these unhealthy communications would result in stress and depression in individuals, destructions in family, divorce in marriage, and conflict and unrest in the society. Therefore, this article suggests enacting positive communications to overcome the aforementioned problems and create healthy and productive relationships because adopting a positive perspective communication would let us lead happy life and wellbeing by avoiding the negative and inhibitive communication process as the prominent scholars of the field advocate (Socha & Beck, 2015).

**Table 1: Examples of positive and negative communication (slightly adapted from Socha & Beck, 2015)**

Examples of potential facilitative (positive) communication processes	Examples of potential inhibitive (negative) communication processes
Alerting	Failure to warn
Conflict-managing	Ignoring
Diagnosing	Inciting
Informing	Misdiagnosing
Problem-solving	Misinforming
Communicating trust	Back-stabbing
Honesty	Cheating
Managing mistrust/distrust	Distrusting
Peaceful communication	Lying
Restoring broken trust	Trust violation
Supportive communication	Violence
Affectionate communication	Bullying

Affinity-seeking Comforting Empathic listening Humor Listening Play	Communicating hate Discomforting Dislike-seeking” fighting Ignoring Meanness
Celebratory support Compliments Politeness (positive face) Praising	Condemning Impoliteness Insulting Put-downs
Interpersonal “flow” Interpersonal beauty Peak communication Synchrony Wordless relational moments	Communicative “ugliness” Controlling Disharmony Hating Manipulation Physical force Undermining

As Mirivel (2014) accentuates, since positive communication is an art, it can be practiced and developed like any other art. So, we have to practice it every day in our daily encounters. A good way to do that is by focusing on using positive language when communicating with others. In order to start communicating in a positive way, we need to learn to think positive first because positive communication begins with positive intentions (Arkadyevna, 2014). To overcome the negativity, we have to change the negative phrases into positive ones by generating as many positive thoughts as we can (Fredrickson & Joiner (2002) because the positive words have the power to change negative thoughts into positive. Similarly, we have to use “I” statement by avoiding “You” statement. For example, rather than saying “you are always late, you don’t care about this job” it’s better to say “I feel excited if you can be punctual”. When you always use you statement, it becomes attacking and defending; and in such cases, communication stops; negativity prevails. Explaining about the effects of negative thinking and language on kids (like such expressions as “Stop,” “No,” and “Don’t do that”), Boyington (2018) asserts that it has negative impact on children’s behavior (<https://theworkathome-mom.com/positive-words-kids>). It kills their confidence and discourages their effort of trying out things. Using a negative language we can’t communicate to our children what they should do; we rather leave them wondering what to do instead of solving the problem. As confirmed by psychology researches, we naturally tend to negativity than to positivity. While it is easy to use negative language because it’s quick, positive words take some thought, but they’re indispensable to get results out of our children. We can think of this situation in boss-employee relationships, too. Imagine how you’d feel if positive words rarely came from your boss’s mouth and instead, you hear language like, “You can’t miss this deadline” or “Once again, we didn’t hit our financial goals this month.” We most frequently encounter negatively phrased in most

of organizations. These compositions discourage the customers, applicants and those it regulates. Let's have a look at the following typical government memo.

*"We regret to inform you that we cannot process your application to register your business name, since you have neglected to provide sufficient information. Please complete ALL sections of the attached form and return it to us."*

This expression tears down the target audience and deteriorate the communication. It is possible to re-write the same example with more positive approach and good intention as following:

*"Congratulations on your new business. To register your business name, we need some additional information. If you return the attached form, with highlighted areas filled in, we will be able to send you your business registration certificate within two weeks. We wish you success in your new endeavor."*

**Table 2: Examples of positive and negative languages for kids**

Negative Language	Positive Language
No candy right now	Let's wait to eat a piece of candy until after we get home so that you can brush your teeth.
Don't drip paint on the table	You can get a few pieces of old newspaper to lay on the table under your project.
Stop bossing your sister	I appreciate that you're looking out for your sister, but please come to me if you think she's going to hurt herself.
Don't forget to wash your hands	Please wash your hands after using the restroom
Stop interrupting!	I can see that you need to tell me something, so let me finish my phone call and then I'll be all ears.
Quit yelling.	I understand you're upset. Please take a few minutes to calm down, and I'll be happy to talk about it more with you once you get your thoughts together

The above table shows how different each type of language is, particularly, for kids. Thus, it is possible to note from the above two examples plus the table that the negative example informs the person what she has done wrong, and doesn't accentuate the positive things that can be done to solve the problem sometimes causing conflicts and confrontations. The positive example sounds completely different, though it contains almost the same message. It has a more cheery and optimistic tone (<https://theworkathome-mom.com/positive-words-kids>).

In the same fashion, we can bring positive communication to our daily lives by practicing the seven behaviors Mirivel has mentioned as fundamental to the practice of positive communication, which include greeting, asking, complimenting, disclosing, encouraging, listening and inspiring. He has the following four reasons to justify his premises:

1. The seven behaviors are a good starting point to guide reflection, inquiry, and engagement in positive communication
2. There is much empirical and scientific research to document the value of each behavior in cultivating human relationships

3. They are easy to remember, practice and experiment within everyday life
4. Each behavior reflects a counterpoint to certain interactional tendencies (e.g. complementing is a counter-choice to the tendency to criticize; and disclosing is to concealing information) (Mirivel, 2014).

Finally, when communicating with others, we have to focus on maintaining the *positive* emotions aimed at mutual understanding and satisfying for all the parties involved by systematically selecting constructive, effective, and supportive messages. Positive communication must be practiced at different aspects of social interaction to bring about healthy relationships and avoid the unproductive and native relationships. We have to practice it at home, at school, at workplace and everywhere in our daily lives. However, most importantly, our attention must be given to our usage of communication technologies. We have to manage our usage of communication technologies especially the social media. We have to make sure they are facilitating positive social interaction; not negative one. While it is not right advocating that we should stop using modern communication technology, we have to think critically about our relationship with it; we have to balance, limit and discipline our usage by recognizing the good of the Internet and cell phones (Turkle, 2011). Similarly, we have to focus on the positive side of the story, not totally ignoring the negative ones, too. The positive stories have the power to create positive emotions & broadcast happiness in our daily life (Gielan, 2015).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Naturally, human beings incline to negativity than to positivity. We find it easier to be negative as the power of bad events outweigh the good ones is found in everyday events, close relationship outcomes, social network patterns, interpersonal interactions, and learning processes. According to Boyington (2018), while we can easily and quickly form and use negative language, we struggle with the positive words because we don't find them easily and quickly. Arguing that it is highly adaptive for human beings to respond more strongly to bad than good, studies end up concluding "bad is stronger than good" (Baumeister et al., 2001). As stated earlier, scholars in social science in general and communication in particular have long focused on the dysfunction of man rather than positive well-being. Psychology scholars have been predominantly concerned with the problematic nature of human interaction such as mental illness, stress, depression, anxiety and so on (Seligman, 2002). Early communication scholarship were also concerned with identifying the communication challenges that people face in relationships like the nature of hurtful messages, aggression, or abuse, the nature of revenge (Mirivel, 2014, Arkadyevna, 2014 and Socha & Beck, 2015) and consequently, unfortunately, the positive side has not been well accentuated until very recently. Given the traditional focus of applied communication researches on the role of communication in identifying and solving the potential problems of human communication like barriers of communication, conflicts, communication crisis, consequences of unhealthy communication as well as studying the dark side of communication that hinder our social interactions like hate communication, racism, criticizing, impoliteness, condemning etc. (see table 1 for detail), the role of positive communication was downplayed in communication scholarship till last decade.

With the contemporary emergence of positive perspectives in social sciences since the beginning of the new century, particularly the positive psychology, researchers such as Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi, Lyubomirsky, and Frederickson are leading the way in positive scholarship, but communication studies is also better positioned to drive this change. Indeed, it is possible to see an exponential augment in the field of positive communication after

groundbreaking works of the pioneer scholars (such as Socha, Mirivel, Pitts, Beck, Waldron & Douglas) have penetrated into the existing communication scholarship.

Thought its building blocks have been there in human interactions and information exchange since time in memorial, positive communication (as a scientific branch of knowledge) is a relatively new area of study in the field of communication. For the most part, communication scholars have focused on the problematic nature of human interaction and its dark side. Even though positive communication is generally seen as an appealing phenomenon of interaction, it remains under-researched from theoretical point of view. The topic, in fact, warrants special attention as negativity prevails in our today's world and it is apparent that a shift of paradigm must be made in how we communicate. By another token, to prevent the conflicts and problems created in the family, marriage, organizations and the society as the whole, a positive perspective of communication should be practiced and developed. Positive communication is not something we are born with, it is rather a skill and an art that can be gained and developed. It's a practical art and form of communication in which we care about people in our surrounding by deliberately choosing ethical, virtuous, kind, peaceful and harmonious speeches and actions to please them and avoiding the negative and harmful practices that can hurt & dehumanize them. Thus, it is encouraged to learn and practice positive communication for the betterment of our lives as well as our social interactions.

In conclusion, apart from the above discussed ways of practicing positive communication and research directives, scholars also suggest other forms such as spiritual communication/prayer, communication excellence, peak communication, resilience and hope, role modeling, stories and so on. Hence, depending on dire interest in positive communication within the field of communication, I strongly believe and suggest that it is important and timely for communication scholarship to open discussion about contextualizing and mainstreaming positive communication within the larger field of communication. I recommend the practice and implementation of positive communication to enhance relationships (in the family, couples and intercultural groups) and to bring about long-lasting happiness and wellbeing. Finally, though varied rapidly growing published works are emerging in the field, still there is an urgent need for organizing conceptual frameworks, building conceptual models, as well as developing theories of positive communication (Socha & Beck, 2015). Thus, it's strongly recommended for future researchers to work on positive communication in different social contexts separately (like positive communication in health care, education, leadership, marriage, family, parenting, social media and so on) with varied research methodologies.

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