**MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT COMMUNICATION**

1. **What’s so hard about communication? Everybody does it.**
   One of the most damaging misconceptions about communication is the illusion of it. It appears easy and it’s true that everyone does it. Communication is so commonplace that we tend to overlook its complexity.

   Although communicating seems easy, *communicating effectively* can actually be quite difficult.

2. **Everybody knows what communication is.**
   We tend to use the term “communication” without realizing that it is one of the most misunderstood yet overworked words we have. We often use it without any general agreement as to its meaning.

3. **Communication happens only when I want it to.**
   We all communicate all of the time. It’s not something we can turn off or refuse to do.

   It’s interesting to note that a very large portion of our communicating is done through nonverbal actions.

4. **Don’t assume mutual understanding.**
   Use questions for clarification. By asking questions you can help to understand the “whole picture” instead of only part of it. Also questions can help determine whether or not you have the same definitions for words.

   Asking questions can encourage feedback and create shared meanings.

5. **Be alert to nonverbal feedback.**
   Frequently the honest or true message is inadvertently transmitted through nonverbal actions or tones of voice. For example, as you are giving John instructions about how to complete his record book he tells you he understands, but at the same time he is wearing a puzzled expression. It is better in this case, to trust the nonverbal message you receive rather than the verbal one.

6. **Reward feedback.**
   This is easy to do when the feedback we receive is positive; it’s not so easy if it’s negative! However, both positive and negative feedback is important for you to know and understand the realities of your 4-H club and the people who make up the club. The rewards don’t have to be of great significance, but they should be enough to make the individual feel that his contribution was worth his time. Often, a sincere “thank you” is enough.