

Communication Roles in a Conversation

Each of these roles is important:

Mover – Begins topics, introduces ideas, takes initial stands. Without movers, there is no direction.

Follower – Supports initial topics and stands, continues and build on a topic. Without followers, there is no completion.

Opposer – Takes an opposing view to an expressed perspective—raises questions, concerns, critiques ideas. Without opposers, there is no correction.

Bystander – Observes the entire situation, stands back, and describes from her/his perspective what s/he has seen and heard. Provides perspective rather than a “stand”. Without bystanders, there is no perspective.

The Three Languages of Expressing the Self:

When a person speaks in a group, listen for the language spoken beneath the words:

- Affect (feeling)
 - Are we taking care of the people and how they feel?
 - How do I feel? How do others feel?
- Meaning
 - What is the significance?
 - What are the implications?
- Power (not authority, but action—the energy to get things done)
 - What are we going to do?
 - What are you going to do?

(based on David Kantor's work in family systems therapy)