

## The Importance of Key Messages

Good communicators don't just wing it. They take the time to prepare, which means building their communication around key messages.

Effective communication depends on clarity. If you are all over the map, each person you are trying to reach will remember something different. At worst, the audience will reach a conclusion other than what you intended.

Focusing your communication requires the development and consistent use of key messages. The discipline is deceptively simple, but once mastered, will make every communication process more effective.

### What is a key message?

You want everyone to understand the same basic message. Each individual may remember different details, but they should all be able to sum up your message consistently in one or two sentences. If they are properly developed and delivered, those sentences will be your key messages.

### To be useful, key messages must:

- Be few in number, usually no more than two or three.
- Be short and concise, generally no more than a sentence or two.
- Be written down.

Too many messages and you won't have focus. If your messages are a paragraph each, you will not be effective. Writing your messages down makes sure they are short, concise and understandable.

**Volunteer to Advocate for Nursing Home Residents**  
**Tough Enough To Care – *Be There***



No Prior Training Required

Make A Difference

### Using Key Messages

You know the basic speech structure:

Tell them what you're going to tell them,

Tell them, and then

Tell them what you just told them.

That, in a nutshell, is the proper use of key messages. You should start any communication with your key messages, return to them throughout, and then summarize with them at the end.