



E-Lock

Remembering the Value of Real Dialogue in Our Electronic World

Most of us use the telephone less than ever these days. Email, texting, Facebook, and Twitter have become significant and ubiquitous communication tools in our personal and professional lives, and for many of us, electronic messaging has become our primary method of communication. And as we evolve into a short message society, traditional voice-to-voice conversation and *dialogue* are becoming less common.

Yet, as we fly through our day while communicating with others through typed words, we may unwittingly enter an *e-lock zone*, an environment in which we leave two important human attributes behind: 1) The ability to recognize a particular tone of voice and emotional state of the other person, and 2) the ability to spontaneously engage in verbal give-and-take and verbal idea generation.

1. Failure to hear “tone of voice”

Sometimes we compose keyboard sentences or touchpad phrases we just wouldn't say face-to-face. Sometimes our words or our mood is misunderstood in text. A short reply or the wrong word choice may easily be taken the wrong way. E-lock can result in frustration, anger, and hurt feelings, as straightforward words are interpreted without the alleviating factor of voice.

2. Failure to experience genuine dialogue

Sometimes e-lock is invisible, but results in lost possibilities. Sentences such as “Wait, what were you going to say?” or “I get the impression you have more to add,” are common in verbal conversation and brainstorming, but are rare or impossible in electronic communication. Two emailers never realize what opportunities may have been missed because a face-to-face conversation or phone call did not occur (another issue needing attention? a better idea? an additional factor learned?). Text-based communication does not allow for spontaneous brainstorming or the kind of conversational wandering which can result in great idea generation.

Three Bidlack Tips on Avoiding E-Lock

1. HOLD AND DECIDE

After writing an important email, don't send it for at least 20 minutes, then re-read it (a good rule anyway). If the issue is touchy, or if your words are open for interpretation, consider calling instead of emailing.

2. SENSE THE DYNAMIC

*If you have a hunch that holding a meeting instead of using electronic conversation could produce better results, **trust your hunch** and suggest the meeting.*

3. USE IT ONCE

Make sure you use the telephone at least once during any critical exchange of text messages, especially when the matter involves a dispute, money, or new ideas.

Human-beings are social creatures, but too often we mistake our electronic communication for real dialogue. Knowing when to pick up the phone and when to meet face-to-face is a skill to be realized after one becomes aware of the real dangers of e-lock.

The tool for **dialogue**
Idea generation, discovery, and give-and-take communication



OLD-FASHIONED
DOES NOT MEAN OUTDATED



MODERN
DOES NOT MEAN PERFECT



Great tools for updates, news, and facts, but not for genuine conversation.