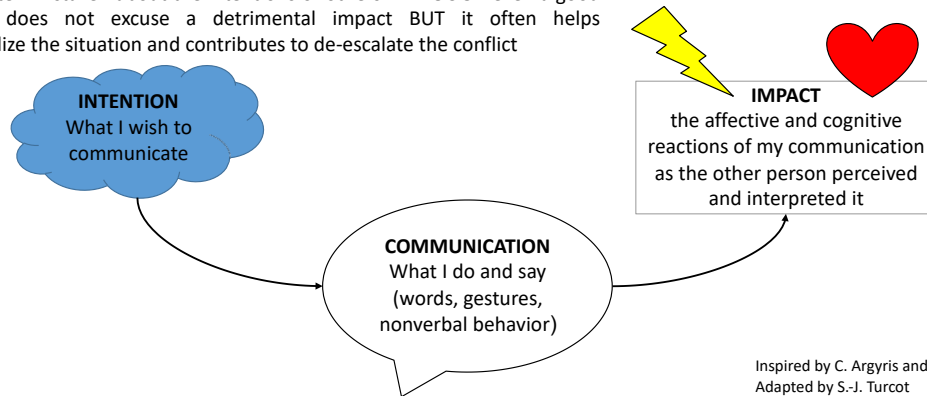


I.C.I. – TOOL C

We are often mistaken about the intentions of others ALTHOUGH even a good intention does not excuse a detrimental impact BUT it often helps contextualize the situation and contributes to de-escalate the conflict



One important factor leading to disputes or conflicts is the difficulty of many of us to separate the intention from what a person has said or what it did provoke as negative impacts or effects. In these circumstances, we tend to be led by our feelings and by the sentiment of being unjustly treated. This results in believing that the other person had bad intentions or willfully intended to hurt you and create negative impacts.

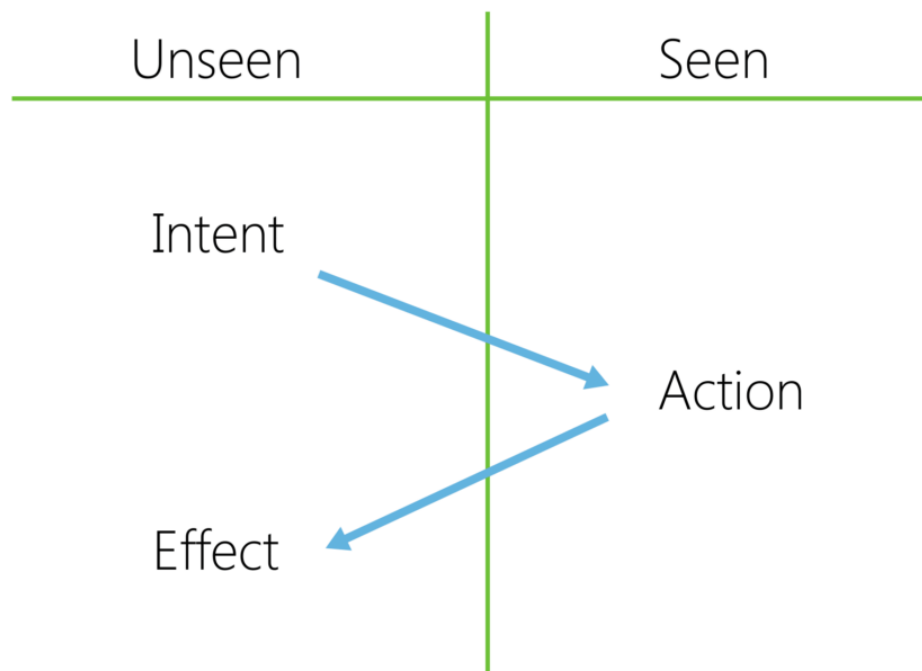
Definitions

- **Intent:** Our intentions influence our outward behaviors. It's the meaning or purpose behind our communication.
- **Communication:** Carrying out our intentions through what we say and do.
- **Impact:** How the other person interprets our communication and what was the impact of it (positive/negative). It's all about how it landed with them, based on their own personal experience and existing relationship with the person.

Dynamic between intent, communication, and impact

Most of the time when people are in a positive and trustful professional relationship, they tend to attribute good intent and to forgive the other when that person has miscommunicated, e.g., when what they said or did was wrong or perceived as wrong and/or generated a negative impact.

However, in situations where trust has eroded or does not exist, communication would generally already be of low quality between the individuals involved. This is when the unseen (intent + effect/impact) plays a role in escalating problems into disputes and conflicts. One or both individuals involved automatically interpret what is seen (action/communication) as being negative.



(Skelly, 2022)

Tips - constructive conversation and problem-solving

It is important to take a step back and think about the situation before having a difficult conversation with the other person. Ask yourself what positive intentions the other person might have had even although what they said or did seem to you to be negative or had a harmful effect on you.

You must remain open to the fact that you might have misinterpreted the intent of the other person or misjudge their communication, and vice-versa. Stay curious. Ask the question directly: “What was your intent?” Remember that you cannot know the other person’s intentions before they share them with you.

And always remind yourself that a good intention does not excuse a negative communication and the detrimental impacts it had on others. However, voicing intentions and ensuring they are well understood by all individuals involved does contribute to de-escalate disputes and conflicts as well as open a path towards solutions.