What Are Barriers To Communication?
adapted from the work of Robert Bolton, Ph.D
People Skills

Barriers to communication are things people say or do that are obstacles to good conversation or good interpersonal interaction. They are hurdles that do not bring discussion satisfaction. They are high-risk responses whose impact on communication is frequently negative.

These hindrances are more likely to be destructive when one or more persons who are interacting are under stress. These roadblocks frequently diminish the other's self-esteem. These roadblocks tend to trigger our defensiveness, resistance, and resentment.

They can lead to our dependency, withdrawal, feelings of defeat, or of inadequacy. They decrease the likelihood that we will find the solution to our problem. Each roadblock is a feeling-blocker. They reduce the likelihood that we will constructively express our true feelings. The repeated use of barriers can cause permanent damage to a relationship.

These twelve ways of responding are viewed as high-risk responses, inevitably destructive elements of all communication. They are more likely to block conversation, thwart the other person's problem solving efficiency, and increase the emotional distance between people than other ways of communicating.