

Communication Savoring and Gratitude

Instructional Tools for Classrooms

Fanari, A. (2020) *Communication Savoring and Gratitude Instructional Tools for Classrooms*, Contemplative Research and Social Transformation, Graduate Student Fellow 2019-2020



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Studies

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Instructor Copy: Outline

Goal: The purpose of this short practice is threefold

1. First, to introduce the concept of communication savoring and explain how it can be used as a practice to enhance, facilitate, and generate positive emotions
2. Second, to invite participants to engage in a short practice of communication savoring
3. Third, to create a safe and welcoming space for participants to engage in this practice

Mindful Objectives:

- Focused attention
- Metacognition
- Emotional Regulation
- Gratitude (long-term)

Schedule (10-15 minutes):

1. **Instructions and explanation of the practice (1 minute)**
 - a. Introduce the activity to the class and provide detailed instructions
 - b. Share screen via Zoom
2. Video of Communication Savoring Practice
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCM9HxNQpLw&feature=youtu.be>
3. **Watch video (9 minutes)**
 - a. Provide advance worksheets to the class
 - b. After watching the video, provide time for students to engage with the worksheet and reflect on their own communication savoring
4. **Complete worksheet (2 minutes)**
 - a. Students will be given time to reflect and write about a moment of communication they savored. The prompt will be provided in the handout.
5. **Share response in “large” group (5 minutes)**
 - a. If they feel comfortable, students can read and share the communication moment they savored.
6. **Take-aways of communication savoring (3 minutes)**
 - a. At the end of the practice, the instructor will provide a brief description of communication savoring and provide additional details about enhancing gratitude
 - b. Instructor should clarify the connection between communication savoring and mindfulness, and explain how communication savoring can be integrated in mindful practices to promote gratitude in the classroom

7. Reflection and debrief (3 minutes)

- a. Conclude this activity with a short reflection time. However, if there is no time, students can reflect on the practice during their own time.
 - i. *How do you think the practice of communication savoring can be used in the college classroom to promote mindfulness, positive affect, and gratitude?*

Script for Guided Communication Savoring Practice

Instructions: The following document provides a script that can be used to guide a Communication Savoring practice in the classroom. While communication savoring can be practiced independently, instructors often have the opportunity to engage in guided contemplative practices with their students.

The following script provides general guidelines that can be modified based on students' needs. Like many contemplative practices, this guided activity is *invitational*, not *expectational*. The following exercise can be modified to best accommodate the learning environment and the instructor's learning objectives.

Time: 8-10 minutes

Centering and grounding (2 minutes):

In this practice, I will guide you to think about, reminisce, or imagine a specific communication moment that brings you pleasure, appreciation, enjoyment, and thankfulness. Relax while picturing this moment. You can relax your body and mind by focusing on a past, present, or future moment that was meaningful to you and that brings you pleasure. Start by grounding yourself in a comfortable position. You can keep your eyes open or closed. You can stand up or sit down, adjusting your body to do what it needs. Relax your head, your shoulders, your neck, your hands, and your feet. Take note of how your body feels. Take a deep breath in, and as you exhale, notice where your body feels the most tension. Focus on these areas as you take another breath. Allow the tension to flow away as you breathe out. As I guide you through this communication savoring practice, feel free to modify the prompt as needed.

Savoring practice:

As we begin our practice, think about the word, "savoring," and what it means to you [pause]. What does the word "savoring" make you think about? Think about something pleasurable that you particularly enjoy, cherish, and/or anticipate. This can be something found in nature, like a sunset or a walk on the beach, or it can be a communication moment that was particularly meaningful for you. It can be a conversation, text message, or special time with another person, including a loved one, a mentor, a friend, or a family member. It can be a past, present, or future moment.

STOP: now that you have a clear moment or thing in mind, try to stop. Slow down and pause, being thankful that this moment was brought up to your attention. Take a deep breath, inhale, and exhale. Notice how you feel. Notice the sensations in your body. Capture this moment and the feelings that it brings.

SAVOR: Now that you have a specific moment in mind, allow the tastes, smells, sounds, textures, and colors to come to your mind. Focus on these sensory experiences. Try to capture everything from all the words that were said to all of the other non-verbal cues (touch, sounds other than talk, and facial expressions).

Enjoy the details of this moment allowing them to soak in and penetrate in your mind and heart. Think about the pleasurable sensations this moment brings to your mind. Does it bring to mind joy, peace, tranquility, enthusiasm, pleasure, and serenity? Does it bring satisfaction, fulfillment, and gratification? Take hold of these sensations and rehearse them in your mind. Think about other people who are there with you, enjoying this moment. Think about the gestures, the sights, the smells and the tone of voice of the other person. If you are by yourself, listen to any other noise that emerges.

SHARE: Now that we have savored this moment thoroughly, think about how you share it with other people. Sharing involves many aspects. You can write the moment down and re-read it when you are going through a difficult time. You can write it like a story or a movie script. You can also share it with the people that were involved in the scene. You can think about how you would tell them in person or with a phone call, text message, or a letter. You can also share it on social media, highlighting the positive feelings that emerged from this experience. Regardless of whom you can share this moment with, remember all the positive sensations that you experienced. Make the other person a participant of the experience itself.

Conclusion:

To finish this practice, return to those pleasurable sensations that you savored. Return to your breath, by inhaling and exhaling. When you are ready, gently return with your mind to the class, move your fingers, and open your eyes.

Communication Savoring and Gratitude: Student Handout

Instructions: The following practice focuses on Communication Savoring as a contemplative practice in the classroom. We will watch a video on Communication Savoring together. Take notes if you need. At the end, you will be invited, but not required, to share your response.

Before watching the video:

1. What does the word “savoring” make you think about? What does it mean to you?

After watching the video:

2. The video provides three specific steps people can take to increase their communication savoring. How can you use these steps to integrate savoring in your daily life?
 - a. **STOP:** how can you pause and be more mindful of moments that you experience in your daily life?
 - b. **SAVOR:** what are some meaningful moments you experienced (or you will experience) that you want to savor and “hold on to”?
 - c. **SHARE:** how can you share these meaningful moments with other people and encourage them to engage in communication savoring as well?
3. In as many details as possible, tell me about a COMMUNICATION moment that you SAVORED. Try to capture everything from all the words that were said to all of the other non-verbal cues (touch, sounds other than conversation, facial expressions, how close were

people standing, etc...). Make sure to describe who was involved. Where and when did it occur? For how long? It might help if you think about writing it as a story or a movie script.

4. What positive emotions, feelings, and memories does this moment bring to your attention?

5. Looking at the seven categories of Communication Savoring (see table below), what type(s) of communication savoring does your moment reflect? Why?

Mindful Objectives: Which mindful objectives did you recognize in this activity?

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-
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Reflection Space:

How do you think the practice of Communication Savoring can promote mindfulness, positive emotions, and gratitude in the college classroom?

References

- Bryant, F. B., & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
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- Pitts, M., Kim, S., Jiao, J., Cooper, R. A., & Fanari, A. Establishing Relational and Contextual Boundaries for a New Model of Communication Savoring. Competitive paper accepted for presentation at the International Communication Association Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. (May 2019)
- Smith, J., & Hanni, A. (2019). Effects of a Savoring Intervention on Resilience and Well-Being of Older Adults. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 38*(1), 137-152.

Resources and Definitions

Communication Savoring:

The process of mindfully attending to pleasurable or meaningful social interaction in real, remembered, or anticipated/imagined encounters and enhancing or prolonging the positive affect (Pitts, 2019, p. 254)

Seven Categories of Communication Savoring (see Table below; Pitts, 2019):

Table 3. Communication Savoring Typology.

Communication Savoring Type	Working Definition
Aesthetic communication	An appreciation of the beauty and playfulness of language as demonstrated in colorful language, strategic use of timing, surprising elements, and delight in the ability for language to move people.
Communication presence	Pleasure derived from mutually, genuinely, and wholly attending to the communicative moment, often resulting in the lack of awareness of time, pressures, or the presence of others, and feelings of intense connectivity.
Nonverbal communication	Taking delight in messages that are communicated through means other than talk, including intimate touch, vocal warmth, smiling and eye gaze, and the environmental context in which communication occurs.
Recognition and acknowledgment	Deriving pleasure from sending or receiving praise or recognition that acknowledges and honors an individual or group.
Relational communication	Finding pleasure in communication that moved a relationship toward greater intimacy or better understanding, often through interpersonal disclosure.
Extraordinary communication	Recognizing and appreciating “landmark” communication events or moments that are unique, special, or novel.
Implicitly shared communication	The perception that one is having the same pleasurable experience as another and deriving pleasure from the unspoken mutual agreement.
Total	

Note. On average, I coded two separate communication savoring types in each narrative.

References

- Bryant, F. B., & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
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