

# CHAPTER TWO

## Mind to Mind: It's All about Communication

We pass the word around; we ponder how the case is put by different people; we read the poetry; we meditate over the literature; we play the music; we change our minds; we reach an understanding. Society evolves this way, not by shouting each other down, but by the unique capacity of unique, individual human beings to comprehend each other.

—*Lewis Thomas (1913-1993)*  
*Author and physician*

As you learn the tools and techniques I use to read minds and you practice the exercises I have included in this book, you will discover that, fundamentally, reading minds is communication. So it will be helpful for me to provide you with an overview of the communication process as a framework for integrating the tools you are about to learn.

Communication is something most of us take for granted. It seems that we've always known how to talk and we've always known how to listen. We can't remember a time when we were not able to do either. It seems so simple. That's why we take it for granted.

But it's not as simple as it may appear. Communication is actually an incredibly complicated process that includes a *sender*, a *receiver*, and a *communication environment*.

Here's where it gets complicated. Both the *sender* (the person sending out the communication) and the *receiver* (the person listening to the communication) have his or her own personal physical and psychological history. The *communication environment*, the setting in which the communication is taking place, includes a variety of distorting, limiting, and distracting influences.

A sender transmits a message to a receiver in a particular environment. That message gets influenced by a host of factors from the time it starts out from the sender’s brain to the time it is processed in the receiver’s brain. At every point along the way, the message picks up a variety of *charges* (positive or negative meanings) that affect the way the message is received and interpreted by the receiver.

Let’s see how this all works.

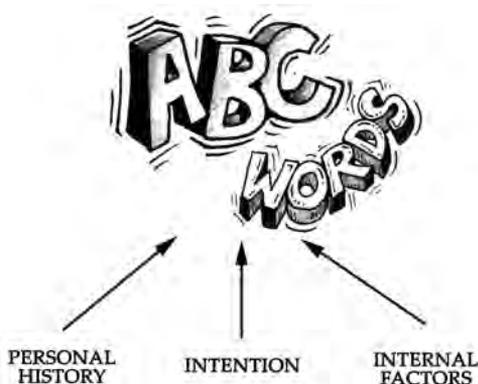
## The Sender

Suppose you and I are having a conversation. I have something I want you to hear. I start with an image or an idea in my mind.



My first challenge is converting that idea into a verbal message so I can send it to you. I do this by “encoding” it into some symbols called “words,” which I have learned over the course of my life.

Here is where the “charges” enter the process. Each word I choose picks up a charge from three places: my *personal history*, the *intent* I have in communicating my idea, and *internal factors*.



As I am exposed to and use words throughout my *personal history*, they pick up various shades of meaning, according to what is happening when I use them. Some have become charged