

## Endorsements

All we ever ask of our EOS® clients is that they are open and honest with each other. If everyone were, it would change the world or, at a minimum, their company. This book is the how-to manual for being open and honest. I highly recommend it.

—Gino Wickman

Author of *Traction* and *Shine*, Creator of EOS®

What Ken and Grace have created is transforming lives from the bedroom to the boardroom and everywhere in between. This is more than just a book. It's an authentic, heart-felt story. A mirror. A tool. It's an inspirational and crystal-clear path to a better you and a better us, making for a better world.

—Lisa Cooper

Founder and Chief People Officer  
Cooper People Group

*Know Honesty* beautifully breaks down two core tenets toward transformational trust building: human connection and healthy communication: truly being open and honest. The 6 practices outlined create a simple roadmap for becoming our best and making a meaningful, authentic impact in our ever-evolving world.

—Kelly Knight

President and Integrator, EOS Worldwide

Communication is the key to success, whether it's with your loved ones or those you work alongside, we are simply better humans when we are open and honest. Ken and Grace have developed a simple proven process to develop open and honest relationships. Our team has agreed to meet others where they are, lean in, listen to understand, and accept the thoughts

of others. In doing so, our relationships are stronger, our attention to the vision is laser focused, and our success has been unbelievably astronomical. All great things take work, but using the Know Honesty pathway has provided us with a north star in terms of communication.

—Bev Thiel  
Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity® Kent County,  
Michigan

Ken and Grace have created practical, compelling, and understandable tools for anyone with the desire to improve their communication with others.

—Rick Baker  
President and CEO, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce

If you are looking to reduce your anxiety about interactions and conversations you have with other people, the practices Ken and Grace share in this book will be a powerful tool for you. Since implementing The Agreement in a few of my closest relationships, I have felt free to be myself without restriction. It's the strongest unlock I've had in my thirties.

—Jeff Pipp  
CEO, Bloom Social

# **KNOW HONESTY**

**ELIMINATE THE DIVIDE, BECOME A MASTERFUL  
COMMUNICATOR, AND CONNECT WITH ANYONE**

**KEN BOGARD AND GRACE GAVIN**



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## Dedication

Ken

*For all the humans trying to navigate this crazy life together.*

Grace

*For Dad, thank you for showing me the value of hard work,  
continuous learning, and fully living each day.*



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# No Two People: *Why Communication Fails*

**W**hat if we told you that just two words could set you free? And that in understanding what they mean and living them out each day, you could magnify what it means to be alive and live a happier, more fulfilled life? Your daily interactions would become more fluid, and the stressors of each day would be, well, less stressful. In these two words you'll find the key to unlocking what it is you really want. You'll find a new level of freedom for yourself and those around you.

Before now, you've heard these words but might not have paused to consider the power held within them. Those two words are: *open* and *honest*.

Picture the flow of water in your mind. Imagine for a moment that rain clouds contain some of the purest water. These clouds are resting just above a mountain, and it begins pouring rain. This pure, refreshing beginning is the kind of water we all wish was available in abundance. But as it hits the mountainside, immediately that purity erodes. As it flows

forth, it picks up dirt, moss, and whatever else might be on the mountainside until it becomes undrinkable, even to the point of sickness. The flow turns and bends as it encounters rocks and fallen trees, guaranteeing its path is never the most efficient it could be. When the water finally joins the other streams running down to create a collective river, it becomes a powerful force, one that is paradoxically life-giving or life-destroying.

Our communication as human beings is quite similar. When we engage in conversation, we have the choice to give the gift of pure communication, or we can pollute it by adding in unnecessary and, often, damaging lies, half-truths, and façades. In return, we can choose to receive someone else's communication fully and in its purest form or we put up the equivalent of rocks and trees to block our own ability to receive it. As we try to communicate, much like the water flowing down the mountainside, our communication becomes distorted, polluted, and, ultimately, life-destroying.

Day in and day out, we observe that people abuse and misuse communication, slowing their ability to adapt, grow, and learn, ultimately making the communication a detriment. The barriers they put between themselves stop the free flow of information. One person's words erupt toward another, thrashing the water aggressively, splashing all over the place, and losing the intended effect. Another blocks the water from even reaching them, as if to say, "Your water is not good enough." Some tainted their water with other guises and lies, ruining the original contents.

This lack of clarity and purity, like the water by the time it reaches the river, is making us sick. It slows down our ability to communicate, discuss issues effectively, and find a solution. Our tainted communication is stopping us from experiencing real relationships and inhibiting us from getting what we want. Communication is our connective life force. It is how we use and exchange information. It's our main source for

growth. And when you understand the importance of communication, you ought to want it in its purest form.

That form takes shape when communication is both open and honest. If you take anything away from this book, let it be the very next two lines.

By open, we mean listening without reservation, putting your needs and wants on pause for someone else.

By honest, we mean being truly and freely yourself, speaking into what you want and how you feel.

When we're able to exchange communication that is open and honest, we're operating at the purest level possible, removing any filters or blocks that inhibit our ability to connect. That is when we're creating *real communication*, exchanging as 100 percent open and 100 percent honest. That's what we're after in every single conversation—communication where everyone is heard and respected.

## Reversing the Mess We've Made

The cultures we're creating and inheriting today struggle deeply to communicate. And the reason why is simple: those at the helm refuse to embrace being open and honest. This refusal breaks down our ability to do better together. A quick scan gives us a multitude of scenarios where this is happening:

Most organizations, their leadership, and their employees struggle to create and exist in environments where the communication flows freely between one another. Instead, we choose to value other metrics first. We quickly forget the importance of human connection and blind our eyes with the end objective, forging the how and togetherness. We then act surprised when our turnover rate is high, and engagement is low.

Geographically, we see it when two nations at odds won't communicate, let alone work toward real communication with openness and honesty. They embrace stubborn ideologies,

unwilling to allow any other to exist but their own—which often leads to war and the unnecessary deaths of those on both sides. The need for control runs deep within the leadership of such nations and ultimately only serves themselves.

Well-intended marriages and relationships suffer because of the desperate lack of communication, making it ever more difficult to navigate the simplest of conversations. Recently, Ken joked to someone, “How is it that the entire world is not divorced?” The reply was, “It is.” Nearly 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce, and second marriages are closer to 60 percent. Our lack of commitment to one another is through the roof. Humans turn away from each other rather than toward each other; we choose the lazier path of disconnectedness over commitment to one another’s collective problems.

Social media platforms are hardly social in any positive or concrete means. We can drop in and out quickly, leave a scathing comment, and simply walk away unwilling to engage in any form of productive conversation. The screens have served as a giant blockade, allowing us to ignore the living and breathing person on the other side of our posts and comments. Social media is a place to point our proverbial guns at one another and retreat to cover without a scratch, leaving others wounded in our selfish wakes.

We continue to create environments that suffocate any opportunity for real communication. Instead, we elect for what will serve us best, whether that means escaping a difficult conversation, holding tightly to our worldview, or taking up all the attention within a space for just ourselves.

We are in desperate need of people at the helm willing to stand, promote, and drive home openness and honesty. That is how we will experience real freedom, for ourselves and for everyone else. Peace comes with knowing we all have a space for our honesty because everyone else in our lives is willing to

be open, and they will have their opportunity to be truly and freely themselves too.

This is the battle. This is the collective problem we face. It's now time to reverse our mess. We can rectify the environments and cultures and no longer remain stuck. We have a choice. It's time to help teams, organizations, and individuals be more open and honest and change the tide.

## **A Universal Truth to Move Us Forward**

Every moment of disagreement is an opportunity to reverse our historical abuse of communication. Working with clients, we've discovered a universal truth: No two people on this planet will walk through life together, agreeing completely. Think about it for a moment. No two out of eight billion people in this world can pair up and agree on every single topic. We won't ever completely align with one another. In fact, people rarely see things the same way. We constantly encounter and create conflicts and disagreements. And that is okay. In fact, it is normal and perfectly acceptable. Disagreement is as prevalent as oxygen. But we've come to avoid, reject, and even hate those with whom we disagree.

The reality is that we've all entered into this world designed for many yet treat it as though it were designed for one. That hardly leaves room for anyone else. We've put on blinders. We've prioritized ourselves. We intentionally and unintentionally trampled over others to serve ourselves first. We're actively creating distance and disruption between one another because the discomfort of being in conflict has become too intolerable. From mundane differences to deeper, more opposing controversial topics, we've come to believe that our point of view is the only correct one. And in doing so, we inadvertently form a chasm between one another. By refusing to accept that others see the world differently than we do, we make it harder and harder to navigate this shared

world. What we must recognize is that our coexistence within a shared and interconnected world largely depends on one item: communication.

**Ken shares the following:**

I will never forget sitting in one of my first college marketing classes. Professor Robert Frey, an international executive of the Whirlpool Corporation, taught the class. I was thrilled to be in the presence of a professor with real-world experience as deep and rich as his. On the first day of class, he shared an important concept with us that would change the course of my life.

Addressing the classroom, he said, “The single biggest issue with companies is...”

I remember getting ready to write this profound, groundbreaking statement. I was thrilled that I was about to get my money’s worth for this college education.

Then, he delivered the answer: “communication.”

I dropped my pen, thinking, “What a joke!” I couldn’t believe that communication was the single biggest issue companies deal with. What about strategy? What about talent? As a nineteen-year-old, I thought, “There is no way that grown human beings can’t communicate.” I didn’t buy it and totally discounted his statement. But here’s the deal—he was 100 percent correct.

As souls navigating this life, we can articulate our wants and needs better than any other species on the planet. Yet, we don’t do it. We rarely communicate as purely as we can. We’re often unclear about how we truly feel or what we really want. We taint our communication, deepening the chasm between

us and reducing the understanding we could have of one another. We've positioned ourselves in a false sense of reality.

The depth of our communication is an amazing gift. It allows us to accomplish remarkable things together, like putting a man on the moon, building skyscrapers thousands of feet high, or finding cures for horrible diseases. But that doesn't mean we take full advantage of this gift. In fact, it seems we are squandering it faster than ever. We can't communicate. Not effectively. Often, our communication is unclear, hazy, and inauthentic. One only needs a little experience in the working world and various personal relationships to realize the extreme absence of real communication. We must master the ability to communicate with one another, one interaction at a time.

In our experience of helping hundreds of leaders, executives, and entrepreneurs get what they want from their businesses, we've realized they have all had an incredible privilege. They have had access to professional help, added perspective, and education that helps them view themselves, their businesses, and the world around them through a different lens. They've agreed to come together and fight through controversial topics and challenges to make their organizations better. We love that this is the case, but the challenge is that this benefit is accessible to only a few. As a result, a whole population of people are missing out on life-changing experiences.

In this book, we will share the experiences, training, and education we walk our clients through every day. We believe the magic and privilege don't have to be relegated to one room and a handful of leaders. We're here to share the brilliant conversations and breakthroughs our clients experience and make them accessible and applicable for all.

Our lives leading up to this moment have been fraught with mistakes and filled with communication mishaps, just like yours. The good news is that we always have the choice

to learn and do better. We're changing and evolving to better ourselves and pass on the lessons and failures we've experienced to everyone we encounter so that we all learn together. We've seen the work that follows leave huge impacts on the lives of hundreds of individuals. The beauty of it is that what works in their lives will also work in your own life. Why? Because at the end of the day we're all just humans who must communicate and build connections and relationships with other people in this world.

We've designed what follows for those who want to overcome the divides and learn to use real communication to benefit themselves and the rest of the world. This book is for those who want to experience greater peace and more space to be themselves. It is for those who want to truly know where they stand in each moment. It is for those who feel the growing disconnectedness between us and want to do something about it. And it is for those who intend to treat life as a gift.