

REDAKSIONEEL EDITORIAL

Ons moet hierdie uitgawe dalk 'n feesuitgawe noem, omdat ons oplaas kan aankondig dat COMMUNICARE nou verskyn op die Departement van Onderwys en Kultuur se lys van subsidiedraende vaktydskrifte. Uiteindelik het kommunikasiewetenskaplikes regoor die land 'n mondstuk wat aan die stywe publikasievereistes wat universiteite vandag stel, voldoen. Op 'n manier wil mens byna voel asof kommunikasiewetenskappe in Suid-Afrika nou vir die eerste keer werklik "erken" word. Die redaksionele komitee van COMMUNICARE spreek sy dank uit aan al die kollegas landwyd sonder wie se hoogstaande navorsing en kwaliteitbydraes hierdie prestasie beslis nie waar sou word nie.

Uiteraard is die tydskrif se standarde geneig om selfs hoër te raak na so 'n gebeurtenis. In hierdie uitgawe het ons hopelik weer die mengsel en gehalte van artikels wat in 'n vaktydskrif met COMMUNICARE se oogmerke tuishoort. Ons doen ook 'n beroep op al die kollegas regoor die land om ons te help om die blink kant bo te hou, en ook ter wille van hul eie departemente.

But with pride must come a little humility. At a (very interesting) seminar on political negotiation recently, most participants were of the opinion that talks cannot be successful unless the "climate" for talking is firstly created, e.g. the opening up of channels of communication, the establishment of trust and the identification of common ground. I couldn't help wondering whether all these participants, pre-eminent politicians or opinion leaders all, were not placing "talks" on a higher level than it actually belongs. As someone put it, there should be no prerequisites for talking, talking should be the prerequisite. Communication is not the end, it is much rather the means to the end. Talks may well be instrumental in creating the climate for "talks" — as perhaps the Kwazulu-Natal Indaba has proven.

Communication is a movement towards one another in which the journey has more value than the arrival. It is rather like a kind of dancing or contact sport; a synchronised double-act to get both parties from outside to within each other's presence. In communication, we shut one another in, create a little prison privacy, and talk each other into our separate lives. Thus in the final analysis it becomes neither mutual performance, nor mutual therapy, nor battle nor a seminar. It becomes a declaration of conscious co-existence, a creation of something out of nothing.

Academics, practitioners and politicians alike would perhaps be wise to note that there is nothing hifalutin' about communication. By its very nature it is the oldest, most natural and most ordinary phenomenon between human beings. It belongs at grassroots level. Our research and our political and managerial policies should be geared to make communication simpler, and not more complex. Once we realise this, perhaps fewer people will be talking down in this country, more will be talking up, and even more will be taking to each other.

Miskien kan mens dit alles opsom deur te sê dat kommunikasiekundiges in hierdie land moet begin om "af" te leef na hul reputasie toe.

NINA OVERTON

Reproduced by Sabine Grawawana for the Indaba Project