



**Imagine What Clear
Communication Can Do
For Your Office**

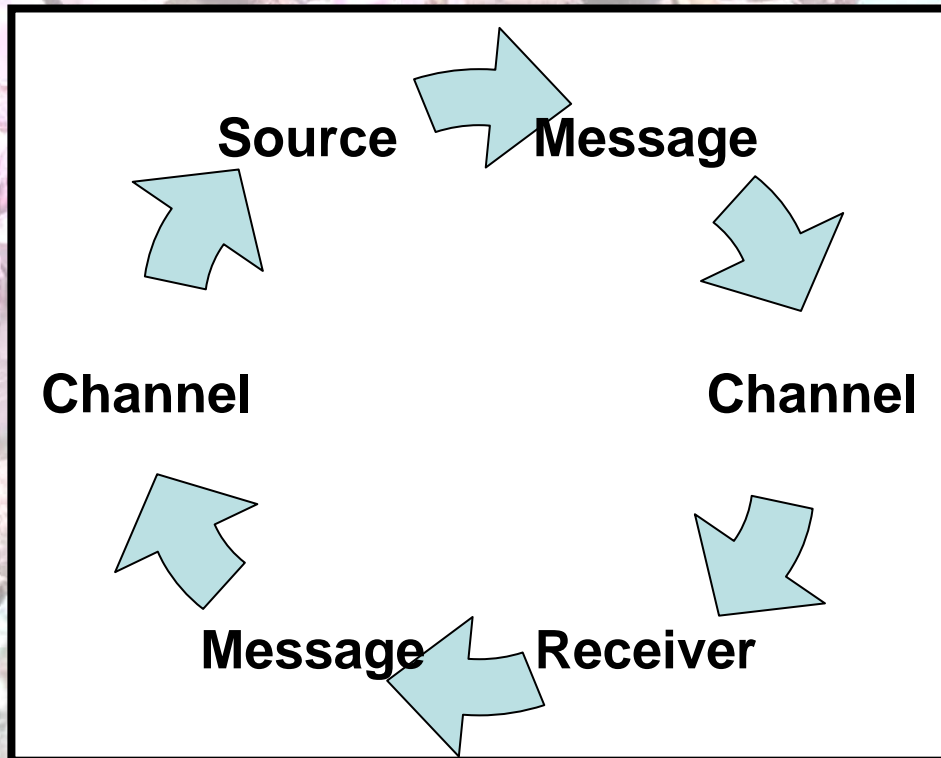
**CAHEA Keynote Session #1
Ruth Anna Abigail, Ph.D.**

Communication

- **Is the study of misunderstandings**
 - **Taco chips**
 - **Sturdy brooms**

What is Communication?

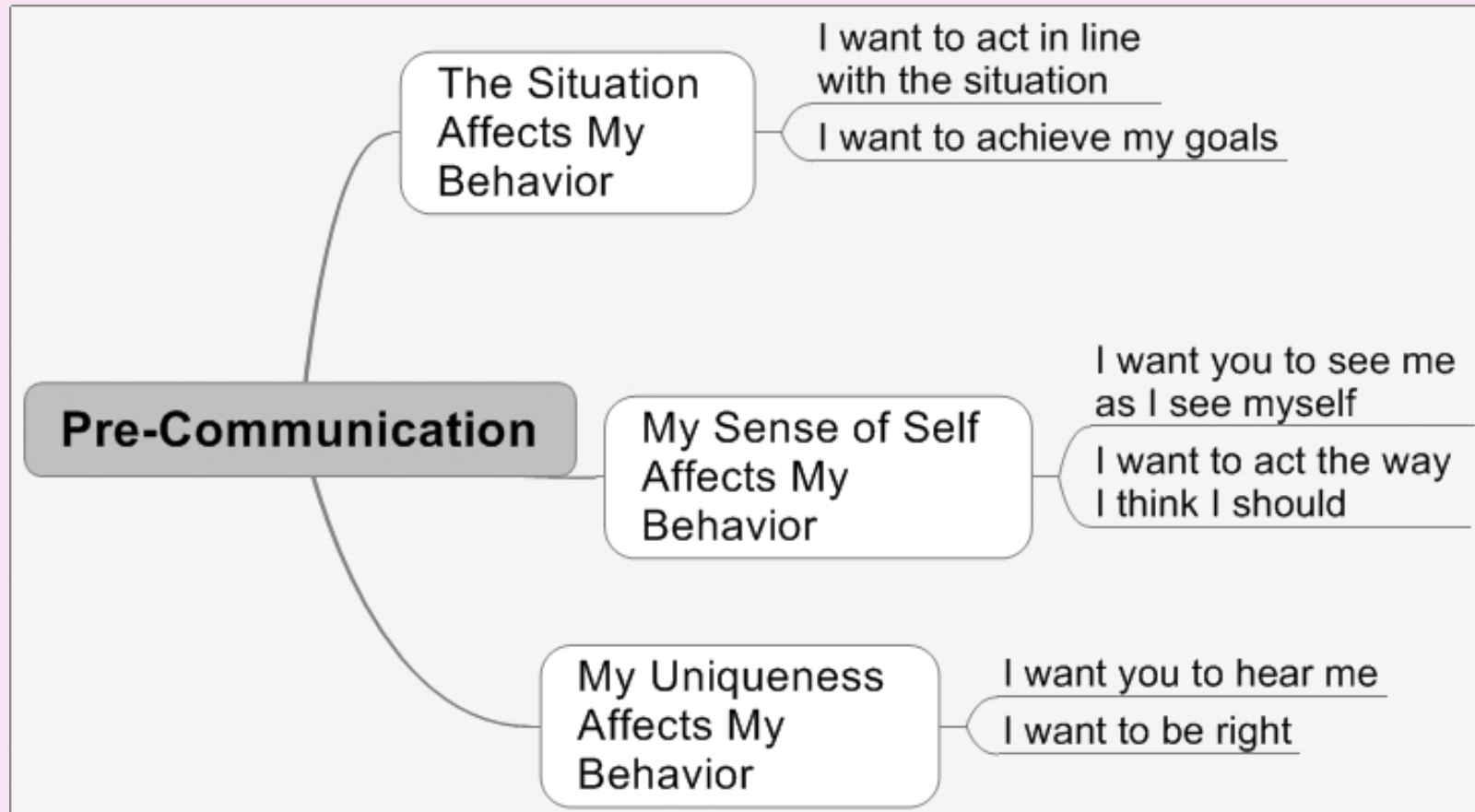
- **Traditional View: Sending Meaning**
- **Subject to “Conveyor Belt” Fallacy**



Within the Traditional View

- **Six Needs in Communication**
 - I want to achieve
 - I want to fit in
 - I want to act consistently
 - I want to be right
 - I want to be heard
 - I want to be seen

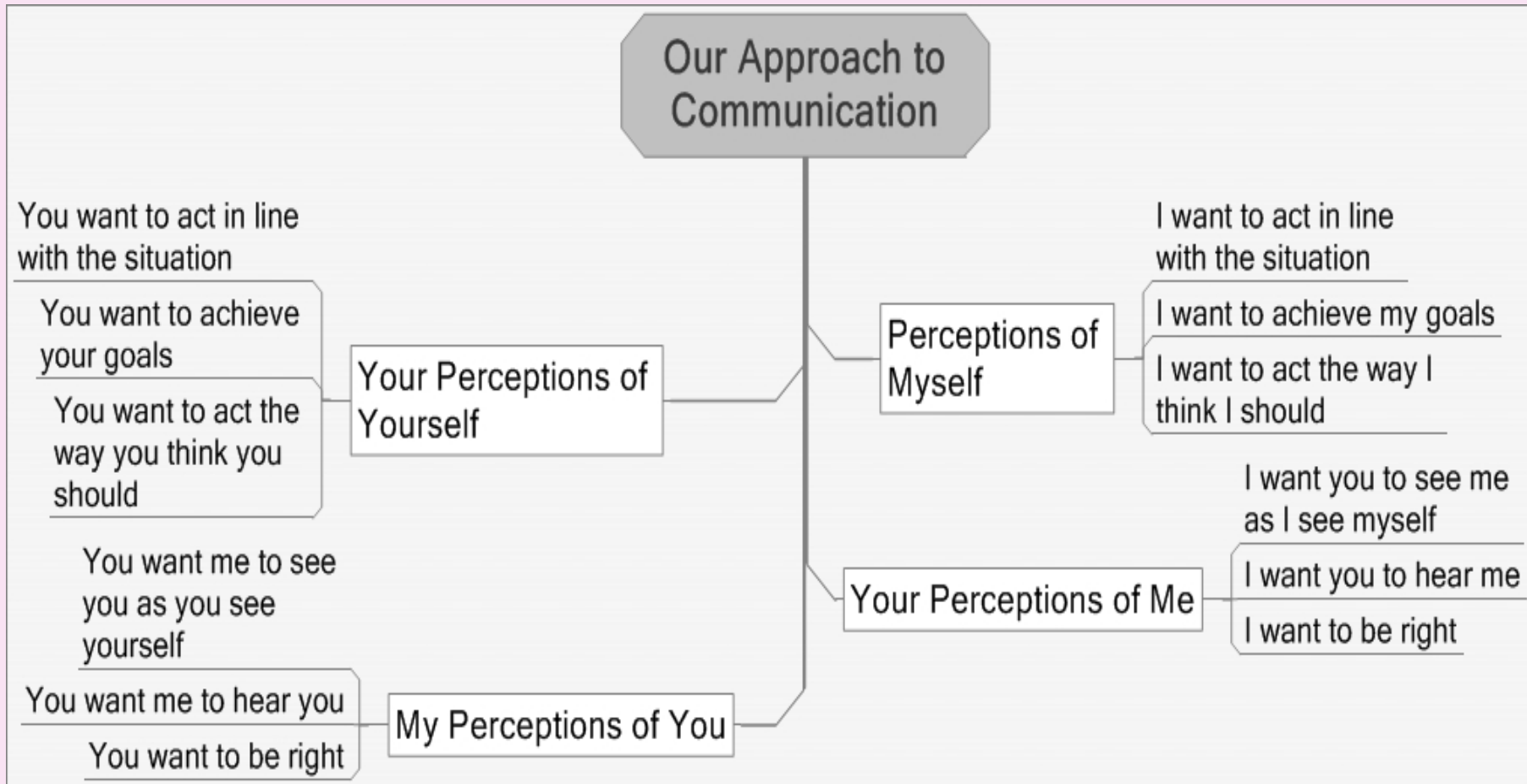
Our Needs Affect Our Communication



What is Missing?

The “YOU”—a sense of the other

Our Approach to Communication





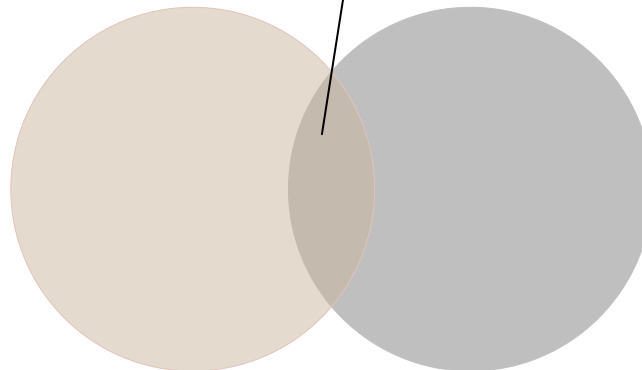
Something is still missing...

**Communication is more than sending
meaning**

Communication is

Creating Meaning

You



What we
create together

Me

Some Starting Principles

- **Communication is**
 - **Culturally constrained**
 - **Occurs in a context**
 - **Sometimes mindless**
 - **Both content and relationally loaded**

Some Starting Principles

- **Communication is**
 - Ruled by equifinality (uncertainty)
 - Unrepeatable
 - Irreversible
 - Rule governed



Most Importantly

There is no communication magic!

Clear Communication

- **Is**
 - flexible
 - mindful of the culture and context
 - mindful of issues of language
- **Pays attention to nonverbal signals**

Clear Communication

- **Asks**
 - **What do I think needs to happen?**
 - **What does the other think needs to happen?**
 - **Am I focusing on me, you, or us?**

Clear Communication

Is not enough



Christ-like Communication

- **Recognizes that**
 - **The world was created by God's words**
 - **God gave no other animal the innate capacity to speak**
 - **Jesus is the word incarnate**
 - **Proverbs 18:21—death and life are in the power of the tongue**
 - **We create reality through our words**

Christ-like Communication

- **Requires embrace**
- **Embrace is**
 - **Attitude toward the other**
 - **Based on the Imago Dei**

Embrace is Indiscriminant

The will to embrace precedes any “truth” about others and any construction of their “justice.” This will is absolutely indiscriminate and strictly immutable; it transcends the moral mapping of the social world into “good” and “evil.”

Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*

Embrace Says

- **Your needs are important to me:**
 - I want to hear you
 - I want to accept you
 - I want to see you as you wish to be seen
 - I want to see you as God sees you

Communication That Embraces

- **Focuses on problem-solving**
- **Says “we,” not “I”**
- **Does not emphasize power**
- **Is creative and inventive**
- **Creates relationships and community**