

THE EXCHANGE

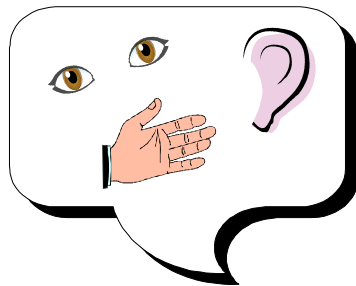
"CAN YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?"

"If there is one secret to success, it lies in the ability to get to the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own."—Henry Ford

Henry Ford saw that flexibility in understanding others is perhaps the most important stepping stone to success. If you've studied the four basic behavioral styles, you know that people are more receptive to messages that are synchronous with their own orientation to speed, detail, risk, task, or relationships with people. Synchronizing communication involves a lot more than these concepts. Another area of interesting work is Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP).

The idea behind NLP is that we process information in a combination of visual, auditory, and physical modes. The current theory is that you can determine which mode is primary for someone by the words they choose. By using terminology that is similar to what is preferred by the other person, you can synchronize or connect more easily with them. People tend to understand and learn more easily with information that is related in visual, auditory, or physical terminology, depending on their natural preference.

"I see what you mean" is a visual reference. Other examples of visual references include "it looks like," "get a clear picture," "take a look at this," "see things as they are," "I can see that," "visualize," "I can place that," etc. An example of a visual-



auditory crossover reference is "I see what you're saying."

"In other words" is an auditory reference. You may hear this kind of phrase when an auditory-dominant person is trying to get a visual or physical person to "hear" what they are saying! Other auditory references include "it sounds like," "voice of reason," "I hear you," "you speak my language," "talk to me," "you can tell that," etc.

"I get the sense that..." is a physical reference. Other physical (also referred to as kinesthetic) references are "get a feel for this," "go through the motions," "gut feeling," "flexibility," "struggling with," "go through the paces," "give me some space," "steps in the process," "hand you the answer," "walk me through the procedure," etc.

When you are communicating with another person, a way you can synchronize or "connect" (physical reference) with the other person is to listen carefully to their word choices. If you use similar terminology, they're more likely to "see what you mean," "hear what you're saying," or "get the same feeling you have." This is the kind of technique that can "draw you closer."

By the way, we all have some preference level of each mode. Most of us have one or two modes that are most dominant. That is our preferred mode. Use this knowledge to adapt to others and "get to the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own!"

What Our Clients Are Saying

"My recent promotion was a direct result of the communication training with TLC. Today, I communicate my ideas clearer, directly, succinctly and with confidence. Every evaluator commented on my improved verbal skills."

Dawn Ginnaty, Avondale Estates GA

"Many, many thanks for your coaching and encouragement! The panel went well and your techniques really work!"

Debby Mullin, Atlanta GA



AUGUST 2000

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DO YOU REMEMBER GUMBY?	2
RUBIK'S CUBE	2
BENDING OVER BACKWARD	3
STRETCH YOUR LISTENING IQ	3
PLAN YOUR FALL RETREAT NOW!!	3
EVER FEEL LIKE A PRETZEL?	4
WARM UP TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE	4

LOOKING AHEAD:

- ◆ The September issue focuses on *Making Decisions as a Team*.
- ◆ Learn about our newest training module, "Meetings that Matter."



Be ever soft and pliable like a reed, not hard and unbending like a cedar.
the Talmud

Any life truly lived is a risky business, and if one puts up too many fences against the risks one ends by shutting out life itself.
Kenneth S. Davis



To learn more about it, click here!

DO YOU REMEMBER GUMBY?



Several decades ago, before cartoons became so technologically advanced, there was a little green no-neck character named Gumby. His sidekick was his horse, Pokey. Marketing opportunists were alive and kicking even back then, so, of course, toy store shelves were soon lined with Gumby and Pokey figurines. They were made of rubber so one could move them to any posture imaginable.

In the mid-80's, TLC chose Gumby as a symbol for desired flexibility. Our work family is encouraged to catch someone doing something out of their assigned responsibility – being flexible, and to briefly write down the name of the person and the admired behavior. This note goes into a slotted box that is opened and read aloud once a month at a staff meeting. The person with the most "Gumbies" is honored by hosting the Gumby figurine in their office for that month. They also receive a modest financial reward.

The biggest reward is knowing that your deeds are recognized and appreciated by your peers and management. Everyone at TLC knows that adaptability and flexibility are at the core of our culture. And besides, it's fun!

What are you doing to let your people know that flexibility is appreciated? Stretch your imagination. As we say at TLC, "That's very 'Gumby' of you!"



Quick Tips:

- Schedule some open time in your daily routines to allow for flexibility and spontaneous actions.
- Keep an open mind when you hear a conflicting opinion by telling yourself, "I'm going to learn something here."
- Purposely do things differently to increase your flexibility: take a different route home; move your trash can; if you're talkative in meetings, listen more, or if you're quiet, speak up; take a walk at lunchtime; act upon an inner urging.

Remember to . . .

- ♦ Ask StartProbes (How and What questions) to keep information flowing and minds open.
- ♦ Identify with people's feelings by using Reflective Statements that allow you to adapt to their state of mind without agreeing with or joining them.
- ♦ When someone tells you, "No," acknowledge their response and then ask, "What are the reasons?"

RUBIK'S CUBE

How many of the following expressions sound familiar?

- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
- "Let's not rock the boat."
- "What's wrong with doing it the old way?"
- "Cause this is the way we have always done it!"

Adapting and being flexible can be tough for some of us. If this isn't so, what are the reasons we keep hearing and saying these things?

Research shows us that approximately 40% of the country places a high priority on consistency (which is a real drag to the folks wanting change). The research also shows that when it comes to accepting new approaches, 54% like to take their time. Although some can argue that being rigid has its advantages, let's examine how one person's flexibility changed the lives of so many.

Remember the multi-colored cubed, puzzle game, *Rubik's Cube*? In 1974, Erno Rubik created this game as a learning aid for his math students. It became such an addictive game, that students played it all the time. It was recommended to Rubik that he market his invention as a toy. Insulted, he refused to allow his mathematical teaching tool to be considered in the same breath as the "Yo-Yo". He was asked to be a little flexible and at least sell it in his home country of Hungary. He agreed to it only on a trial basis and ended up selling 2 million *Cubes* (Rubik did the math, that was one *Rubik's Cube* for every 5 children in Hungary). After becoming *more flexible* about sharing his game, he accepted an offer from the Ideal Toy Corporation, sent the world on a Rubik's Cube craze, and became the first self-made millionaire in his country.

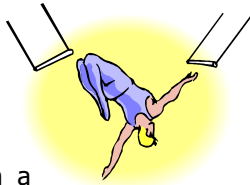
Of course there are times to remain firm in your beliefs, but being stubborn in business and life can hurt you and others in the long run. If you ask Erno Rubik, I'm sure he has calculated how much inflexibility almost cost him. How much is it costing you?



BENDING OVER BACKWARD

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

Regarding this month's theme of flexibility, what is a more appropriate idiom than "bending over backward"? It means to put forth a great effort to make someone else happy. It is often stated after several efforts have already been made. Considering the familiarity of this "aching idiom," it still has mysterious origins.



Going back to the 19th Century, before circuses began traveling internationally, most American trapeze artists performed the high wire stunts by swinging on their stomachs, throwing and catching each other. This style limited mobility, sight, and maneuverability. After traveling abroad to France, the Americans saw how the French performers hung by their feet and legs, upside down and performed more elaborate aerials.

When French performers were questioned about their techniques, they explained that the bending over backward style was originally used as a safety procedure to give the trapeze artist more recovery time to catch a falling performer. When the French discovered how many accidents resulted from the American flat belly style, they provided demonstrations (for a small performing fee) to American trapeze artists showing them how to safely perform more death defying tricks, hanging by their legs while bent over backward. Headlines later printed, "French Bend Over Backward to Help the States!"

PLAN YOUR FALL RETREAT NOW!!



Spring Creek
Retreat

Summer is quickly passing. Children are back in school. That usually means the majority of your people are not on vacation! Autumn is a perfect time for training and getting your team away to plan ahead for the coming year.

We recommend Spring Creek Retreat as an ideal location for small groups. Check our website www.springcreekretreat.com to see for yourself how you can get your team away to get them together.

STRETCH YOUR LISTENING IQ

By Ben Cairns, M.A.

Make the choice to be more flexible. If you do, you'll learn more about other people and yourself. Some people see things only one way, their way. They make a quick judgement based on their first impression, and refuse to consider alternatives. While this may be a closed-minded approach, it is what most of us naturally do! Be more flexible in your listening and you'll be more knowledgeable.

It is human nature to defend our first impressions. The research clearly shows that first impressions are formed quickly and based on a small amount of information, and are long-lasting and resistant to change. The research also shows us that the most communicatively competent people are more open to new information than average people are. They tend to be more flexible when listening to others and processing information.

Assumptions, judgements, and opinions are all based on limited information. If you stick to your first impressions and defend them vigorously, you're continuing to operate on a limited information base. How can you be more flexible?

Recognize the things that get in the way of your ability to listen with an open mind. Here are a few common barriers:

- ❖ You already have an opinion.
 - ❖ You don't like the person talking.
 - ❖ They give too much or not enough detail.
 - ❖ They talk too fast or too slow.
 - ❖ They repeat themselves.
 - ❖ You have something else on your mind.
- When you feel yourself getting defensive or hear yourself automatically objecting to someone else, ask yourself a few questions:
- ❖ What can I learn by listening to this person with an open mind?
 - ❖ Everyone knows something I don't. What does this person know?
 - ❖ What are the real issues behind what this person is saying?
 - ❖ How does this compare to what I already know?
 - ❖ What's the main point here?

You don't have to attend every argument you're invited to. By the same token, you don't have to believe everything that you hear. Flexibility in listening includes being open to the possibility that someone else may have something to teach you.



I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend.

Thomas Jefferson

There is danger in reckless change, but greater danger in blind conservatism.

Henry Glasgow



Do not be too timid and squeamish...All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make, the better.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

...it behooves us to adapt oneself to the times if one wants to enjoy continued good fortune.

Niccolo Machiavelli

TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC

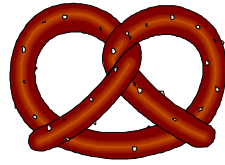
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EVER FEEL LIKE A PRETZEL?

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, CEO



Do you strive to be so flexible and adapt to the needs of others to the point that you begin to feel like you're twisted into a pretzel? One more bend and you snap!

I recently purchased a car in Atlanta. The dealer sent the information for title and tag to the Tennessee Department of Safety in my county. I've had the same vanity tag, "I CAN," since 1984. Three years ago when I leased a car through the company, I relinquished this tag to TLC. Now, I wanted to relinquish it from TLC back to me.

Considering that I own 83% of TLC and considering the long history of this tag being in my name, I was confident that I would accomplish my task. One hour and twenty-five minutes later, I did. I was first told it was a conflict of interest. I was next told to get another partner to come and relinquish the tag. Then I was told to, "go get an employee and have them sign over the tag." I nicely, yet firmly, refused to bend at each request. After two calls to Nashville, I was finally allowed to accomplish my goal.

Instead of being flexible, I used my communication skills and forced patience to get a government agency to adapt. That victory was sweet! I only wished I had been clever enough to hold up the tag and say, "I CAN get this relinquished to me!"

My favorite pretzels are soft ones. If you've ever watched someone make soft pretzels, then you know that the dough is not haphazardly thrown into shape. The baker takes the pliable dough and bends it into shape so it will bake evenly. In life, whether you choose to bend or use your skill to have others do so, don't be brittle and cause someone to break. Adapting can be like the soft pretzel. Learn the art of the master baker, and live your dreams!

WARM UP TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE

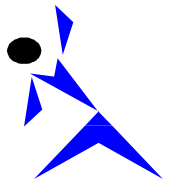
If you attempted to participate in an advanced aerobics class without warming up, it could result in a strained muscle. In exercise or sports, warming up loosens the muscles and increases flexibility. We also need to "warm up" our communication muscles to be more *flexible* with people. You would not want to abruptly change the way you communicate with someone without warming up to him or her. If you forced the communication, you could "strain" the relationship.

Here are some communication "exercises" to warm up to before adapting your communication to be more flexible with others:

- ❖ Ask open questions (beginning with "how" and "what") to find out what they are expecting you to do or consider (Sometimes it's not as bad as we think.).
- ❖ Resist the urge to defend your position by saying things like, "*Because we have always done it that way,*" "*That will never work,*" or "*We've done that before.*"
- ❖ Be informative when having to adapt to someone by using specific words with numbers and percentages instead of saying words like: better, easier, and faster.
- ❖ Remember that 54% of the population will resist change. To get more comfortable with change, make an effort to try something new - just to get out of your long established habits! Listening to a different radio station in the car, venturing out once a month to a restaurant that you've never been to, and reading an article or book about a subject you know nothing about are all ways to practice flexibility.

There are several ways to warm up to being more flexible with people. Depending on how comfortable you already are or how much you have to adapt to others, you might have to stretch more. Just like in sports or exercising, stretching first to warm up can make the performance better.

When adapting to others, instead of trying to be flexible overnight, start small and work your way up. You might be surprised at what you can gain!



TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!