

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Resolving Conflict."

GIVING CORRECTIONS THAT COUNT



Approximately 82% of the people in this country dislike giving corrections. At least 40% of these people wish that others would simply discipline themselves. When conflicts arise, sometime it is necessary to correct behavior. Focusing

upon the behavior, rather than the individual, is the first step to becoming more comfortable with corrections.

Make sure you do your homework before a correction. Investigate what happened and the circumstances that led up to the event. Keep an open mind because jumping to a conclusion can lead you down the wrong path.

Once you have your information gathered, let the individual know that you want to talk to him or her. Also tell the person the nature of the subject to be discussed. This allows the person to be prepared and less defensive. Depending upon the urgency of the situation, the time between notification and the meeting may be quite short. Just make sure that the person realizes the purpose of the meeting.

Once you and the individual are located in a quiet and private location, begin by asking the person what happened. Since you did your homework, you will be able to compare this response to your research. Sometimes the stories will match and the individual is up-front in admitting the error. If the person is correcting himself, there is little need to correct because you may need to only find the solutions. Other times, the report that you hear may be quite different than what you heard before. By asking additional questions and analyzing the answers, you will be able to determine what actually occurred. A benefit of asking the person to give his/her account of the event is that he/she feels heard. This lowers defensiveness and increases the opportunity that the individual will exit the meeting with a more positive attitude and determination to do right the next time.

After listening thoroughly to the individual, if a correction is needed, factually talk about the consequences, clearly stating the correct procedure or rule. Avoid using words that increase defensiveness including: "you", "but", "should", "always", "never." Stick to the facts. Keep your voice at lower pitches, volume, and rate. It may be helpful to jot down the main facts to keep you on track.

Immediately after telling the consequences, ask the individual for solutions. This involves them in a positive move and sends the message that it is time to move forward. Use open questions such as, "What can be done to prevent this in the future?" Make sure that you listen completely to their responses. Strive to build upon their ideas. Offer suggestions to add weight to the solutions. Exit the meeting with high positive energy and follow through as agreed upon.

Simply put, TLC calls this process "Ask-Tell-Ask." You ask what happened. You tell the consequences. You ask for solutions. Try it and you may be amazed just how easy corrections can be!

IN THE NEWS

Beverly Inman-Ebel honored in Glasgow, Scotland



Beverly Inman-Ebel, CEO of TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC, has just been named the recipient of the prestigious "International Woman Entrepreneur of the Year" award given by FCEM Congress (Les Femmes Chefs D'Entreprises Mondiales, translated, "The World Association of Women Entrepreneurs"). In October, the 52nd FCEM World Congress met in Glasgow, Scotland, with representatives nominated from 61 countries.

This year's theme, "Communication in a Modern World," brought women entrepreneurs together from all around the globe. Women from divergent nations, languages, and cultures united in dialogue and experience and to share information.

Suzanne Pease, who accepted the award for Beverly, reported that the committee's decision for Beverly was unanimous. "What stood out from the rest of the candidates was the amount of time Beverly devotes to helping women business owners all over the world." Beverly left Scotland the morning prior to the award announcement to speak to a group of women business owners in Spokane, Washington.

Beverly's reaction: "I'm honored to be recognized by my sisters from across the globe. There are many women from third-world countries who are trying to raise their standard of living by becoming business owners. They are the real heroes."



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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ The December issue of the Exchange focuses on Making Tough Decisions.

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the [July 2003](#) edition: [Speaking Up](#).

Win/win is an attitude, not an outcome.

Don Boyd



Helpful Hints:

- To appear more calm and in control, talk slower and lower your volume.
- Avoid vague wording such as: "good", "right", "fast", "better", "expensive", etc.
- Discuss conflicts in private and keep confidential what was discussed.

In a conflict, being willing to change allows you to move from a point of view to a viewing point - a higher, more expansive place, from which you can see both sides.

Thomas Crum



To learn more about it, click here!

YOUR VOICE IS YOUR CHOICE

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

The fastest measuring stick in determining if a person is getting angry is to listen to their voice. When people get upset, they talk faster and get louder. The give-a-way is when someone shouts, "LOOK, I AM NOT YELLING!"

When resolving conflicts, the words we use are important. Because 93% of our communication is based on nonverbal cues, that only leaves 7% being devoted to our words. So, although it is advantageous to use appropriate wording, our message is remembered for how it is said as opposed to what words we use. Remember the old saying, "It's not what you say but how you say it."

Here are some strategies you can use to calm yourself down or calm someone else down when communication is stressed.

Insert more pauses. This will result in your speaking rate being decreased. When you talk slower, people can understand you better than when you are talking quickly. You appear more calm and collected when you speak slower. Be careful. If you talk too slowly, you might get interrupted.

Talk softly. Volume is a one of those voice tools that we use to get attention. Sometimes it works too well and gets negative attention. When you yell, whatever you are saying, the message ranges from, "I am highly agitated," to "I have totally lost my mind!" In either case the message is negative. Lowering your volume is one of the easiest ways to show control.

Keep your pitch low. Physiologically, women have higher pitch ranges in their voices than men. That does not mean that all men have deep voices, just listen to Mike Tyson or Michael Jackson. Whether you are a man or woman, the results of high pitch and irritation are similar. Think about the last audio book, relaxation tape, narrated CD, or professional speaker you listened to. What was his/her voice like? Chances are it did not sound whiny, nasal, fast, or loud. Instead, it probably sounded distinctively clear with good volume and was paced at an easy-to-listen-to rate.

In person, how we sound makes a tremendous impression on others. On the phone, it becomes even more important. Remember that we cannot control how others talk to us. We can control how we respond. Your voice is your choice.

LISTEN AND ALIGN



Toddlers make problems go away by hiding or placing a blanket over their head. They have figured out that if they can't see you, you must not be able to see them. Gradually they learn that even when they

remove themselves from the conflict, it does not go away. They are still learning this process as they finish school and go to work for your company.

Conflicts arise when one person's opinion or perception opposes another person's idea. It is human nature to protect oneself. While opposing opinions are being expressed, it is natural to shut down listening because you are receiving information that does not fit with your idea. This is the old blanket method of handling conflict. While this may protect you from confusion, this very act prevents you from resolving the conflict.

The next time someone says something that you oppose, tell yourself to listen closely. Encourage yourself to learn something different. Stop your opposing thoughts and really tune into what the person is saying. Relax your bodily posture, which, in turn, relaxes your ability to receive information. When you do not agree, remind yourself that perhaps you do not have full understanding. Ask questions to get the information that will aid you in knowing where the other person is coming from. Listen until you are able to say in your own words what the speaker is saying. It might come out like this, "So, as I understand you, you are saying that the team needs to re-think the process in order to include current trends. Right?"

After you have assured yourself and the speaker that you have received the message correctly, find an area of agreement. Sometimes that area is simply that you both are looking for a solution to move the team forward. Aligning after listening is important because it reduces defensiveness on the part of the original speaker and it allows you to be more objective rather than responding quickly and emotionally.

The objections you have can be placed in the grammatical form of questions. Instead of saying, "Current trends are not very stable", ask "How stable are the current trends?" This allows the other person to be invited into the conversation rather than feeling excluded or antagonistic.

Think of this analogy. If someone falls off of a bridge, you want to help him out. Staying

Continued on page 3

IN A PICKLE

According to statistics on behavior, 68% of our population will be hesitant in directly resolving conflicts, while 40% will try to completely avoid them! When a person is involved in interpersonal conflict, they may feel like they are "in a pickle." But what does being "in a pickle" have to do with conflict?



Before refrigeration, vegetables and meats were put into large vinegar or brine filled barrels for preservation. This process was called "pickling." Over time, these barrels would become filled with various items. In the event that you put in a cucumber first, then later placed other meats and vegetables on top of it, to retrieve the cucumber (most likely now a pickle) or any other item, it was an ordeal to get to the bottom of the barrel. Over time, "in a pickle" became synonymous with being in a challenging situation.

Regardless of how well you handle challenging situations with others, strive to listen more than you talk to keep yourself from being "in a pickle".



In one of our concert grand pianos, 243 taut strings exert a pull of 40,000 pounds on an iron frame. It is proof that out of great tension may come great harmony.

Theodore E. Steinway

LISTEN AND ALIGN, Continued from page 3

on the bridge may well place you too far away to be of any assistance. Jumping in the water with him may only place both of you in danger. By reaching the bank, you are close enough to reach the person with a limb, yet safe enough to ensure that your strength will not be swept away.

It is similar with resolving conflicts. If you stay on the bridge with your lofty and opposing ideas, you may never convince the other person that your way is helpful. If you follow them only to fight the current, you may both lose. By aligning with the individual, you will learn more and be in a position to help.

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I've utilized all of the tactics I learned from the sessions. It is awesome to see how effective asking instead of telling can be. I've actually learned more about my daughter by simply shutting my mouth and listening to her. THANKS!"

Nicole Johnson, Atlanta GA

My favorite part about today was... "I liked everything!"

Anonymous Seminar Participant

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I have just received a promotion. I love all of the perks that come with it, but, I hate having to correct the people who report to me. Some of them are my friends. When they would mess up before, it was just funny. Now I have to clean up their messes and it is not fun anymore. When I have to correct them, I feel horrible, they feel horrible, and it really affects morale on our floor. I don't want to give up this opportunity. If I don't correct those that report to me, my supervisor then chews me out, which is even worse! Please advise.
Bent Backbone

Dear Bent,

Correcting employees can be challenging, especially if friendship has been established. On the other hand, a well-established rapport can make it easier. The next time you have to correct someone, instead of telling them what they did wrong, ask them to tell you what they think they did wrong. In some cases, they know they made an error and they know what to do to resolve it. In this case, a lengthy correction on your part is not needed. Include them in the resolution process by asking questions such as, "How can we prevent this in the future?" or "What steps can be taken to make sure this is done correctly from now on?" This form of correcting can leave you and the other person feeling comfortable about the situation and your relationship.

To send in your questions to TLC, email us at: tlc@talklisten.com. Title the Subject Line: DEAR TLC.



Remember to...

- **Gain the other person's perspective before addressing your assumptions.**
- **Keep the discussion focused on solutions.**
- **Refrain from using accusatory wording such as: "you", "should", "wrong", "but", "never", etc.**

In order for you to profit from your mistakes, you have to go out and make some.

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.

Timothy Bentley



Where you end up isn't the most important thing. It's the road you take to get there. The road you take is what you'll look back on and call your life.

Tim Wiley

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!

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CEO CORNER: "The Up-Side of Conflict"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

Something is wrong. Conflict is in your face. You feel it in your gut. Thoughts of pending doom, stupidity, and an occasional ray of hope kept you awake most of the night. People are mad, or worse – disappointed, at you. Yeah, conflict is in your face.

There is a good side to conflict. It reminds you that you are alive. It makes you feel the whole palate of emotions. How long do we stumble through life before we remember to live? Facing diversity can bring out the best in a person.

Under conflict we remember to focus. The devitrification is removed. As we investigate the problem, we begin to see clearly. If we sustain this clarity, it can positively influence other parts of our lives.

Conflict requires us to prioritize. We discover that what seemed to fill our mind and time yesterday, is but a blimp upon the screen today. It defines what is essential for survival. We realize that being a couch potato after a hard day doesn't make us feel better, but doing some form of physical exercise does. The activity clears the mind, allowing it to focus on resolving the conflict.

To survive conflict, we must hone our skills of human interaction. Without careful applications of listening and sharing, the conflict mounts, causing confusion and doubt within and to others. Most conflict is caused by more than one person, so what makes us think we can solve it alone? During the investigation, the debate, and the resolution, we learn to deal with people because we better understand them and how they operate.

One of the best advantages of conflict is what we learn about ourselves. If we like what we learned, it builds confidence. We approach life with new energy and determination. If we do not like what we learned, we can begin to metamorphose in order to become a stronger and wiser person. Look back long enough to learn the lesson. Be careful to avoid pity parties even if you are the only one invited.

In order to reap the benefits of conflict, it is necessary to follow some guidelines. Eat nutritious food instead of reaching for chocolate, coffee, or alcohol. Include physical activity each day. When stress increases during the day, remember that motion changes emotion and get moving. Balance your focus with short snippets of remembering the reasons that life is important to you. Look at your child's picture or remember

being at your favorite place. End each workday with a plan for tomorrow. Engage in a relaxing activity before going to bed.

A day free of conflict is an easy day. I like easy days just like you do. I also realize that I become a better person when I experience the emotions, focus, prioritization, interactions, and lessons about myself. So feel, focus, prioritize, interact, learn and live your dreams!



FEATURED SERVICE: E-LEARNING/ON-LINE TRAINING

TLC is now a provider of core skills training and services in e-learning/on-line training.

- **Affordable on-line learning through 70+ courses** for core soft-skills, conveniently accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for a full year.
- **Focus is on practical working knowledge that is immediately usable**, where the content is focused on the few fundamentals that have the greatest influence on overall performance.
- **30-45 minute sessions** where the major thoughts and ideas of each course have been condensed into a short time frame with automatic bookmarking capabilities so a learner can come back later and finish where they left off.
- **Quality content**, rich with usable job aids, developed by professionals who are considered content experts in that particular category.
- **Reporting capabilities** allow management to access the system anytime to see who took what courses, how long they spent, if they completed them, and more.
- **No plug-ins, narrow bandwidth** so that the courses are simple and direct, without multi-media additions. This approach enhances easy implementation and successful learner interaction with the courseware.

For information or to arrange a short demonstration, call Don Wheeler at 423-622-8255.

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