

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: WHEN IT'S YOUR TIME TO TALK

Responding

How many times a day do you experience this scenario? You are on task and someone approaches you with a mixture of information and opinion as they talk your ear off. You stop what you had been doing, and strive to listen in order to make some sense of this.

If you are this person's manager, your brain is already jumping to conclusions and you have most likely reached a decision that you will promptly supply just as soon as they quit talking. Perhaps you will just interrupt them since you already know what they need to do and you are so busy.

If you are this person's co-worker or friend, you may offer words of encouragement, or if you have heard it before several times perhaps your patience has worn thin and you just want to get back to work. Now if the information is new or has good potential for sharing with others, then you may demonstrate more patience.

Does any of this sound familiar? Sometimes you are a very good listener and other times you may just be waiting for a chance to jump in and start talking. There are five basic types of responses. Read the following paragraph and quickly decide the response that is the closest to the one you might offer:

"This plane is hurry up and wait. It's like being hurdled into a small jet that the airline sets on the tarmac for an hour. I dropped everything else I was working on in order to get the projections in for the Blake contract. Now it seems the specs have changed and all the work I did is worthless. Somebody needs to get their ducks in a row before taking flight!"

- » Response A: You should have seen that coming.
- » Response B: That happens all the time to me.
- » Response C: I can tell being productive is important to you.
- » Response D: What questions will you ask next time before you begin?
- » Response E: Go in and talk to them about this.

Pick your response that is most like what you might say and then read below.

Response A is a Rebuking Response. This expresses criticism based on a judgement of the message. The result will be an increased emotional level of the speaker. In the example above, the Rebuking Response will likely make the individual feel inadequate.

Response B is a Relating Response. This expresses agreement with the speaker. While it makes the speaker feel understood, it reduces accountability. Relating Responses can also start pity parties. Unfortunately, it doesn't change anything.

Response C is a Reflecting Response. This is a non-judgmental response that verbalizes the emotion of the message. It can build understanding and allow the speaker to solve his or her own problem. Standing alone, it doesn't solve everything, it just neutralizes the moment which can allow the person to think more clearly.

Response D is a Requesting Response. This is a response that asks for additional information. It keeps the speaker talking. It can make them feel grilled if the timing is off. It is best to use Start Probes (questions that start with 'how' or 'what')

Response E is a Recommending Response. This is a response that offers advice. It increases the speaker's dependency and reduces problem solving. While it is often appropriate, it is like handing a person a fish when they are hungry instead of teaching them how to fish for themselves in the future.

In the last volume of The Exchange, TLC was encouraging you to listen to others. Now we are encouraging you to listen to yourself. What types of responses are you making? What types of results are you seeking? Think before you respond.

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Change from the Inside Out.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our [Listening](#) or read other [previous issues](#) of The Exchange.

"It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

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How to Get Information Out of People

Vincent Ivan Phipps

People strongly dislike being cut off. We dislike it in traffic. We dislike it on the telephone. We also dislike it in conversations.

Your response can dictate the flow of the discussion. If you speak too quickly after the other person has spoken, you will be perceived as not thoroughly thinking through your answer. If you advise too quickly, you can be seen as non-emotionally connected. You get accused of wanting to solve their problem by offering an unsolicited solution.

Remember the last time someone wanted to talk out a problem and you gave them a solution too soon? They most likely became upset with you for trying to solve their problem!

Just like communication, responding is an art. It takes timing, thought, practice, and understanding. The next time you have an opportunity to respond, use the following TLC Tools to get more information.

First, practice the power of the pause. Before responding, giving an answer or just commenting, pause 2-3 seconds. This gives the person more time to share and express him/herself. If you are an extrovert, meaning you talk first then process it later, pausing may be hard for you. Waiting to speak 2-3 seconds will feel like 2-3 minutes! Pausing enables you to think about what you say before you say it.

The average person can process words at 500 per minute. Yet the average person can only speak at 150 words per minute. This means that if you pause right before speaking, it gives your brain time to select the appropriate words that effectively convey your point. By blurting out the first thing your extroverted mind can think of, you run the risk of having to correct yourself later. Sometimes it causes you to restate what you said replacing it with what you meant to say. Either way, your response was unappreciated.

Second, ask questions. In Volume 4, 2008 of the Exchange, the topic was, "Ask and You Shall Receive." That issue focused on how to ask questions. Go to <http://www.talklisten.com/newsletters/2008/april/>. When you respond, ask questions such as, "And then what happened?" "What did you do?" "What else?" Be sure to ask only one question at a time. You will get credit for being a great conversationalist, an attentive listener, and an empathetic person for wanting to

know more. Keep your questions open. This means asking questions beginning with "what" or "how." These types of questions are "Requesting Responses". See the article, "Responding" in this issue.

Third, remain non-confrontational. When responding, stay away from words such as: you should have, but, why, wrong, not, etc. If someone takes the time to confide and share, they want a listener, not a lecturer.

If you are a solution-oriented person who is listening to someone vent about a problem, it may be challenging for you to listen without offering advice. Resist the urge to fix it too soon. Instead, focus on their feelings instead of their actions. For example, if someone vents to you about turning in something late and they are now subjected to a penalty, avoid saying, "Why didn't you just turn it in on time?" Instead respond with, "I am sorry you feel bad about that. What will you do differently next time?"

Ultimately, people know they are to be held accountable for doing what's right. When you respond, you have the opportunity to channel the conversation toward comments and questions that can stifle productivity or towards paving a path to success.

In the News

Vincent Ivan Phipps, TLC's Senior Communication Coach, was just awarded "45 under 45 Leadership Award" at the Tennessee State NAACP Conference on October 18, 2008. Gloria Sweet-Love, President of Tennessee NAACP presented the award in Nashville. The award highlighted young trendsetters to all disciplines across the state. Here at TLC, we are very proud of Vincent!

What Our Clients Are Saying

The seminar was very relaxed and you encouraged participation. Great information and it made me think. I learned ways to deal with my new staff. Also great energy!

Tammy Donnon,
Collegiate Licensing Company,
Birmingham AL

Quick Tips

- ✓ Unsolicited advice is ill advised.
- ✓ Pause two to three seconds before responding.
- ✓ Determine where you want the conversation to go before selecting a response.

"We keep our power by protecting the power of others."

Thomas Moore

"It takes two to speak the truth - one to speak and one to hear."

Henry David Thoreau

"To get people to understand our point of view, we must first try to understand theirs."

Sidney Keyes

"A problem well stated is a problem half solved."

Charles F. Kettering

"The man who desires to improve a human being must begin by appreciating him."

Romano Guardini

For Permanent & Positive Change

Featured Service: When It's Your Time to Talk

Therese Padgett

Conversation, by definition, is always give and take, requiring both listening and responding. When it's your time to talk, two elements are very important: right timing and right choice of words. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The time is always right to do the right thing."

TLC conducts an interactive seminar called, "Find a Better Way to Say It." Discussion points covered in this volume of The Exchange, "types of responses" and "information, not opinions", are included in the seminar. Other issues are:

- » Credible Compliments
- » Constructive Confrontations
- » Words that Spell Trouble, and
- » How to Handle Rejection

Like learning to play a piano, practice is the most effective way in which to learn new skills. During our interactive seminars, you are given plenty of time to practice and sharpen the skills that provide the keys to finding a better way to say it. Whether "it" is responding appropriately to comments based on desired outcomes, giving credible compliments that contain specifics, ensuring that criticisms are focused on acts rather than personalities, avoiding words that raise defensiveness, or managing rejection by getting information, right practice is the key to improving your communication skills

To find a better way to say it, call TLC today and schedule this interactive seminar for your team. We can be reached at 423-622-TALK (8255) or 1-888-BECAUSE (because we always communicate).

Happy Birthday!

Happy Birthday to TLC clients celebrating in December:

- » Brian Baker
- » Khadir Paden
- » Lachon Graybill
- » Charles Pelcher
- » Steve Walker
- » Ricky Francis
- » Daniel Sklar
- » Bob Lehmann
- » Rick Rowell
- » Rebecca Quigley
- » Lori Taylor (Varner)
- » Doug Manggrum
- » Danny Flowers
- » Andriette Turner
- » Jayanth Manay
- » Bruce Hulse
- » Robert Max
- » Susan Hopper
- » Debra Johnston

*"The bow too tensely strung
is easily broken"*

Publilius Syrus

*"It is best to learn as we go,
not go as we have learned."*

Leslie Jeane Sahler

*"From listening comes
wisdom; from speaking
comes repentance."*

Italian proverb

*"Opportunities are usually
disguised as hard work, so
most people don't recognize
them."*

Ann Landers

*"If [a man] is brusque
in his manner, others
will not cooperate. If he
is agitated in his words,
they will awaken no echo
in others. If he asks for
something without having
first established a [proper]
relationship, it will not be
given to him."*

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For Permanent & Positive Change

Chief Executive's Opinion

Beverly Inman-Ebel

We recently went through a historical national election. I received daily emails from both sides. Most of the emails were untrue and inflammatory. I decided to be fair and make both sides angry with me.

My best friend sent me an email that really insulted Republicans. She asked me to forward this to my Republican friends because she didn't have any. I could see why. I responded that I would not forward it to my friends because I treat my friends better than that. I also requested that she stop sending me such emails. The next day I saw her in person and she did not mention it, so I brought it up. I seldom suffer from lack of directness. She knew what I did not appreciate and I was removed from her Republican bashing list.

My niece sent me an email that was striving to insult the Democratic candidate, but was actually insulting the intelligence of people who sent it. It was full of fear stating that the Bible warned that the anti-Christ would be Muslim and a smooth talker. I responded that Mohammad was born approximately 300 years after Revelations was written, so I questioned the accuracy of her source and asked her to take me off her list of political emails.

The election is over and Americans voted in record numbers. Regardless if you are happy or depressed about the results, it is time to move forward and respond with an eagerness to help fix what needs

to be fixed. It is going to take all of us to make a positive difference. After September 11, 2001, I remember we stopped being divided. If we can do it once in a generation, we can surely do it again.

When the Wall Street disaster hit, I responded by contacting a financial expert and creating a program to help community banks. We are also working on a program to help health care employees be what they are capable of being. I am working hard to keep TLC stable and working towards growth. In November I addressed a conference of small business owners in San Francisco and encouraged them to step up during these trying times since we drive 52% of the dollars in this country.

On a personal level, my family just purchased a new used-car for our son in college. He is happy and safer. The dealer was happy to make a sale. My husband got a good deal although he is still in buyer's remorse as I write this. Let's all do what we can to help our country, our economy, our companies, and ourselves. This is no time to sit back in fear and inactivity. Respond to the call. Realize that if it is to be, it is up to me.

Listen to what you are saying. Is it building someone up or tearing the person down? Choose how you respond. And make sure you do respond. This is no time to be quiet or meek. Listen. Respond. Act. Live your dreams! ♦

"Self-expression must pass into communication for its fulfillment."

Pearl S. Buck

"If thou thinkest twice, before thou speakest once, thou wilt speak twice the better for it"

William Penn

"Not knowing the question, it was easy for him to give the answer."

Dag Hammarskjold

"Sometimes you have to be silent to be heard."

Stanislaw J. Lee

"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech"

New Testament, II
Corinthians 3:12

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 e-mail 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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