



Middle East Region
Staff College

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Effective Listening

Presented by
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Effective Listening

Quote:

“Every man I meet is in some way my superior, and I can learn of him.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Overview

In a number of the sessions I give about people and how they think I use an illustration which aids in the understanding why it is important for each of us to think about ourselves first. In western culture it is considered ‘wrong’ to think about ourselves and therefore we find it to be an uneasy feeling to think of ourselves. There are good reasons to think of ourselves and understand how our minds work. The story is as follows:

Story

After boarding an airplane the stewardess provides all the passengers safety information in the event of an emergency. The announcement will be “in the event of a drop in cabin pressure the oxygen mask will drop automatically from the overhead compartment. Place the mask over your mouth and nose and place the elastic band behind your head holding the mask securely in place. If traveling with a child or someone needing assistance place the oxygen mask over your face first before assisting others.”

This is an excellent example of what life requires. First, take care of yourself, then you will be in a position to help others. In the story, if you do not follow instructions you may well be unconscious and unable to assist another person. If you do not provide for yourself you will be unable to aid others. This is true in all aspects of life. The subject of listening requires some additional material to better understand why and how listening is of value to everyone. This may well be one of the most important reasons we are CAP members.

Quote:

“To entertain some people, all you have to do is listen.” Ann Halliburton

EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN RELATIONS:

In the study of superior human relations, one of the most important axioms is what we call the axiom of indirect effort. The *axiom of indirect effort* says that in our activities with other people, we get almost everything we want in an indirect rather than in a direct way. We achieve happiness not by trying to become happy, but by engaging in activities on a day-to-day basis that we find valuable and worthwhile. The finest way to impress another person is to be impressed by them. If we want other people to respect us, the surest way to achieve that is to respect other people.

An individual has a healthy personality to the degree to which he can get along with the greatest number of different types of people. A person with high, genuine levels of self-esteem and self-acceptance has, naturally and without effort, the ability to get along with the greatest number of other people.

What can we do on a day-to-day basis to improve the quality of our relationships with others? Aside from working on ourselves, what can we do to, with, and for other people to improve the quality of our interactions with them? Everything we do to raise the self-esteem of others will increase the quality of our human relation. If we go through life doing everything possible to make other people feel good and valuable about themselves, we automatically feel valuable and good about ourselves.

Comment:

The average employee spends about three-quarters of every working day in verbal communications. Nearly half of that is spent listening. The average employee is about 25 percent effective as a listener. This means that if a person receives a salary of \$50,000 per year as a manager, over \$12,500 of it is paid for being an ineffective listener.

What can we do to make other people feel important? First of all is acceptance, which is one of the deepest cravings of human nature. We can accept another person totally and unconditionally without judgment. The second thing we can do to make other people feel important is approval. We can praise and reinforce everything a person does that is right or good. Another thing we can do is to express appreciation or gratitude, which causes other people to feel what they're doing and saying is of value and consequence. Admiration is a tremendous way of building the self-esteem of another person. We can admire traits, such as punctuality or generosity, or possessions -- things people own.

If our aim is to develop high levels of self-esteem in others, to make other people feel valuable about themselves, we must never criticize. Nothing destroys human personalities, undermines self-esteem, lowers self-confidence and causes negative, if not hostile and violent, reactions more than destructive criticism. Never argue with other people. When we argue with others, we're saying to them in effect that their thoughts, opinions, and values are wrong.

The more attention we pay to other people, the more we convey to them that we consider them to be valuable and important. We pay attention primarily by listening. In listening we find three things happen. Intent listening builds trust between the two parties. Listening builds character in the listener because active, concentrated listening takes self-discipline. Listening builds self-esteem in the person listened to.

There are several techniques involved in effective listening. Face the person squarely, lean forward, and concentrate totally, without mental wandering or interruption. Pause before replying, which conveys to the person that you are giving careful consideration to what he is saying. If a person has made a point and it is unclear to you, say, "What I understand you're saying is this," and feed it back to him. Ask open-ended questions to help the person express himself fully.

Quote:

"A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years' study of books."

..... Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The most important place to start developing superior human relations is in marriages and relationships. The first problem that arises in marriages and relationships is lack of commitment.

A lack of commitment in a relationship suggests to the other party that he or she is not good enough for total commitment. If one person has the courage to commit himself wholeheartedly to the relationship, it often gives the other person the same courage.

Another problem occurs in marriages and relationships when one person tries to change the other or expects the other to change. Nothing puts more stress into a relationship than the suggestion that one person is not quite adequate the way he is. Unless a person sincerely desires to make the change, there's nothing you can do to get him to change.

Jealousy is another problem that occurs in relationships and is the result of a low self-concept in the person who experiences the jealousy. The way to overcome jealousy is to work on your self-concept, because a person with a high, positive self-concept and a genuinely high level of self-esteem does not feel jealous.

Another cause of problems in relationships is self-pity -- feeling sorry for yourself for something the other person has or has not done to or for you. The way to deal with self-pity is to work on your self-concept, get busy on your own goals, accept yourself as a valuable person and stop feeling sorry for yourself.

Story

Proctor & Gamble was one of the first companies to listen to the customer. In the 1960s, P&G publicized an 800 number to serve their customers. Trying to serve the customer, they reaped an additional benefit. The information gathered from listening to the customer told them that the average household's weekly laundry increased from 6.4 to 7.6 loads. At the same time, the average washing temperature dropped 15 degrees. This change was caused by the new fabrics introduced to the market. A new product was created to meet the demand -- All-Temperature Cheer.

The basic rule in relationships is to always expect the best from the other person. From the law of expectations, we know that our expectations, whether positive or negative, of the people close to us always tend to be fulfilled. Always expect others to be successful, continually tell others that you believe in them and trust them, and encourage them to go for their goals and to believe in themselves.

There are several important, basic principles of relationships. The first is that similar self-concepts attract. A second principle is that liking and respecting another person is more important and more enduring than loving him. The third factor is that opposites attract, but only in temperament -- the outgoing person must be matched with the less outgoing person and the more dominant person with the more recessive. In every other aspect, nature requires similarities -- similarities in values and in attitudes toward children, religion, money, restaurants, family, politics, living standards, and all other aspects of life.

The relationship between parents and children is a very important and special one. We are marked for life by the quality of the interaction that takes place between us and our parents in our formative years. The role of parenting is to nurture high self-esteem. To the degree to which

parents nurture high self-esteem in their children, that is the degree to which they have been successful as parents. There is nothing that more permanently impairs a child's lifelong effectiveness than destructive criticism by a parent.

Nothing builds children into strong, healthy, self-confident adults more surely and more rapidly than a continuous flow of love and approval from their parents. Make your love unconditional; make it crystal clear to your children that there is nothing they could ever do that would cause you to love them less. We show our children that we really love them through physical contact, through hugging and kissing them and making it clear that we consider them valuable. The more we look at our children with love in our eyes, the more they grow as people.

Spend totally uninterrupted, quiet, quality time with each child every day. Children who know their parents love them unconditionally don't have problems in school and have the strength of character to resist peer pressure in destructive directions.

The purpose of life is to develop loving relationships. When we look back over our lives, we find the most enjoyable times were shared with those we love. Love grows only by sharing. The more you give away, the more you get back. If we can learn to love ourselves and others, we can then go on to the full realization of our human destiny.

Quote:

"Big people monopolize the listening. Small people monopolize the talking."

. David Schwartz, The Magic of Thinking Big