

February 2003

*Change before you
have to.*
-- Jack Welch

*Saying that men talk
about baseball in order
to avoid talking about
their feelings is the
same as saying that
women talk about their
feelings in order to
avoid talking about
baseball.*

-- Deborah
Tannen, You
Just Don't
Understand

Asking Versus Telling

Think for a moment about your communications in the last 24 hours.

How often have you been asked for your insight, opinion, suggestions, recommendations etc.?

How often were you told what someone needed, what to do, and maybe even how to do it?

There are definite advantages to "telling". It takes less time, we get things done the way we want, and we can move on. There are situations where "telling" is the most appropriate thing to do. On the other hand, "asking" has its advantages too. Sometimes we get new information, different perspectives, the other person feels valued (assuming of course the questions are interrogating), and most importantly, the other person has the opportunity to contribute and develop.

People who are constantly "told" can lose the ability, desire and motivation to think for themselves!

Think for a moment about the way you communicate.

How often do you tell and how often do you ask?
What opportunities have you missed?
What are you willing to do differently?

My point is simply this...if you're responsible for developing others (personally or professionally), the most effective way is to make the time to "ask" instead of "tell".

More On Communication Styles

Last time we briefly covered four basic communication styles and some of the strengths of each style.

Dominance - fast paced, quick thinker, focuses on results
Influence - fun, communicates easily, motivates others
Steadiness - subtle, indirect, inclusive, listens well
Compliance - confident, thorough, factual, clear communicator

Here are some tips on the approach to when you communicate with each of the styles:

Dominance – focus on the facts; show respect for their time and authority; be clear about the results and next steps

Influence – get to the point quickly; ask for their ideas and thank them; explain

*We make a living by
what we get, we make
a life by what we give.*
-- Winston
Churchill

Essential Connections
50 Pond Ridge Dr
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Phone:
(616) 956-5662

Fax:
(616) 956-3106

E-mail:
coach@connectionscoach.com

www.connectionscoach.com

how they will benefit

Steadiness – be friendly; emphasize mutual goals; allow them time to respond; avoid challenging or confronting

Compliance – clearly state objectives; provide the details; make your requests clear; allow time for them to respond

Learning to communicate with others in ways that best meet their preferred styles, will enhance the effectiveness of your communication beyond what you think is possible.

Pay It Forward

The movie "Pay It Forward" is one of the most heartwarming, thought provoking movies I've seen in the last 10 years. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it.

The concept is about "paying it forward" vs. "paying it back"; in essence, doing a favor or something nice for someone else instead of the person who did something nice for you. In the case of the movie, it's about paying it forward 3 times instead of just once.

I often wonder how different our world would be if we all just accepted the "pay it forward challenge". Personally, one thing it changed for me is the increased awareness to "make someone's day". Whenever I'm out shopping or at a restaurant I make a special effort to show the service provider how much I appreciate what they're doing. I get so much more back than I ever give, its really no effort at all.

You can find more information at:
www.payitforward.com
www.payitforwardfoundation.com

Until Next Time...

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Coach, Consultant, Facilitator
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