

The DWH Consulting Quarterly

Improving the bottom line... through people

1st Quarter 2003
Volume 1, Issue 1



Talking the talk : three paths of personal mastery to effective communication

Communication is one of the foundational pillars of a sound and healthy organization.

HIGHLIGHTS

Talking the talk...	1
Beating the Odds...	3
Taking stock...	4

Believe it or not, every conversation, at work or in life, counts. Many ask, why should they? If you care about making a difference, conversations offer the best way of expressing yourself.

The idea sounds fundamental, but many of us do tend to forget the basic idea of paying attention and aren't getting the kind of results that we hope to see.

Over the years, I've conducted numerous organizational assessments with managers and employees alike.

The overwhelming feedback singles out poor communications as the culprit that is responsible for any organization facing routine and high-level challenges

How many times have you chaired a meeting, held a one-on-one conversation, or lead a forum knowing you weren't at your best?

Conversation matters. To produce the results you'd like, here are three paths to transform the quality of your conversations.

Breakthrough connections : being present

Without question, being present is one of the most powerful skills available to you

both as a leader and as part of an organization. And being present means having a sense of self that many of us aren't accessing now. Today, people from all walks of life express the need of "getting present" to a situation.

On the surface, it sounds simple. You say to yourself, "I'll just listen, and absorb more information than I do when I'm in my normal listening mode."

Listening for information makes perfect sense. Unfortunately, I'm afraid this won't necessarily develop your capacity to get present.

Presence not only requires a person to listen for content, but also to get connected with the source of another person's life energy, physical presence, and emotional energy.

And unless you're in touch with your own, you'll have difficulty connecting with another's.

It will require for you to get in touch with your own awareness and experience of self under typical as well as trying circumstances.

Only when you have this enlarged sense of self, can your presence raise the quality of your conversations.

Continued on
Page 2

...effective communication

Continued from page 1

Tuning in: hearing beneath the words

Listening is one of the most powerful means available for us to impact conversations. But, many are primed in the knowing mode before actually hearing the message.

Leaders often neglect to create the space of openness in their listening. For instance, Gregory is a manager in a small manufacturing company. He was having a hard time making a connection with many of the female employees in his unit and was also having difficulty relating to employees of color. Several women as well as employees of color reported to upper management that Gregory treated them unfairly, disrespected them, and discriminated against them in promotional opportunities.

Not until Gregory became aware of his listening, did his relationship with employees change. With this new and expanded view of self as a listener, Gregory's relationships, with more than two-thirds of his staff, improved. He was able to listen underneath their words in conversations.

Use language to shift conversations

Our language can either support or detract from us being in conversation with others. Language literally is the source of our speaking in the world and provides us with the power to create or destroy relationships.

For example, Ginger's a chief executive officer at a small manufacturing plant in Northern California. She places the daily responsibility of work in the hands of the department managers without micromanaging their operations.

On the other hand, Ginger's conveys contradictory messages to her management staff and employees. She is holding a great deal of anger and frustration with one staff member, the personnel manager. The manager brings problems to her attention without bringing recommendations to address them. Ginger hasn't mustered the courage to express her true feelings and use the power of language as a course of action.

Ginger's unwillingness to be straight, leaves the personnel manager believing that he's doing a good job. And her resistance to entertain a frank conversation is not only having an adverse impact on her relationship with him, but on all the other managers.

A few managers have become resigned and have fallen into a similar pattern of behavior. The situation is likely to deteriorate. But if Ginger understands the power of language, she can support the personnel manager in facilitating his shift from a narrative of disempowerment to one of empowerment.

In brief, the impact of your conversations on others depends in large part on getting present, listening beneath the words, and enlarging your language. As you transform these three ways of being in the world, the results that you produce in conversations, in your communications and within your organization, can be extraordinary.

Braving the odds - clarity through communication coaching: An interview

Why did you want to do this work to improve your communication skills?

When I thought of contacting an integral coach, I was struggling with my administrative team. I wanted to bring cohesiveness to the management team and actually wanted to work on a better communication system among us as I could tell we weren't always speaking the same language and the blockage seemed to impact the flow of work and the overall quality of the work environment.

What were the immediate and long term changes you noticed?

It made room for the new to enter - we all changed by the intervention of having the coaching and respecting ourselves at the same time. Jobs and maybe the titles attracted us initially but then we began to ask the question, is the job really for us? In terms of communicating, I was able to have the hard conversations I could not have before.

How did the process work for you?

I love doing the work, but the tension I felt among the team was becoming unbearable; our team was moving into the crisis level and I didn't know what was going to happen and why it was happening. I wanted to create an authentic team and so I was hoping that we could create harmony within our differences.

Did it happen?

It really did. The team regenerated itself and the atmosphere changed, the aura of that change surrounds us. I feel light, wonderful and great – and those were just tangible magnifications.

How did the communications tools help you?

Some of the tools we were given, took us out of normal way of looking at our resources. I immediately got objectivity out of the coaching process. I was able to see what others were saying and communicating. And once we did the additional communication assignments along with the coaching us, it really helped. Speaking from my truth, although it sounds simple, was not easy

because you showed us that it is not about telling the truth, but speaking from the truth. I still catch myself sometimes but it has become a habit and is natural for me to do it.

What were the organizational challenges and effects of the communications coaching?

The main thing for us was that we had to see this as an investment rather than a budget item. I had to take the risk and believe that the outcome would outweigh the costs. I saved the agency money by investing in the coaching process. If you have the same old formula for success and want different results, I feel you are ready for coaching. We went to the core of the issue and it gave us a platform to address other concerns. Now we have some tools and skills to do anticipatory planning and strategic planning and we don't have to shut down.

What were some of the results?

I gained a key insight: don't stop working on yourself. I am learning that there are other things that I can access in terms of blockages in my communication. I am now turning into my fears instead turn away from them. The key to success is discovering who you are. I have a hunger to develop myself from this process.

During the coaching with Dr. Hewitt, I began to wonder why I was attracting the bad stuff and was angry. But now I see that it means being accountable for one's self.

Dr. Hewitt was not the therapist or counselor. I wanted a grade when I first started. Now I sit without judgment. The progress was wonderful. It was a new way of allowing me to be myself.

Would you like to say anything else?

Dr. Hewitt's guidance provided my organization the opportunity to have the hard conversations. If you have integrity to keep doing the work you do, good things are bound to come.

As Executive Director, Grace is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of a vibrant, rapidly-growing, not-for-profit agency. Grace hoped to improve the interaction between her and the agency's leadership team. She met with Dr. Hewitt to discuss her experience of the coaching process to build competencies in leadership communications



Improving the bottom line...through people

DWH CONSULTING
20139 Crow Creek Road, Suite 100
Castro Valley, CA
94552-3725

PHONE:
510.888.0360

FAX:
510.888.1060

Visit us online at:

dwhconsulting.com

DWH Consulting

20139 Crow Creek Road, Suite 100
Castro Valley, CA
94552-3725

Taking stock of your relationships: what's possible for you?

As summer approaches, many of us are beginning to take stock of our first semester report card. In reflecting over our relationships we may ask ourselves: Where did I experience a breakthrough? Where did I trip over my feet? And, what results am I capable of producing?

To transform relationships, you have to get personal with people. True connection creates the space for others to experience you fully and opens for them a brand new way of being when they're with you.

For relationships to come alive you'll also have to step out of the comfort of familiarity and into the unlimited universe of intimacy. Ask yourself, what new awareness could shift your current and predictable relationships to another level of development?

There's no magic pill in this. It takes work and practice. The operative word here is practice. If three new things came into your field of vision, it might be a catalyst for action.

To facilitate this action, first, the suit of character armor must go. All of your pretense and protection must be laid aside for you to live out in the open.

If you're squirming in the chair while reading this, it's your natural resistance talking to you. What we resist persists. It wants to hold on to that image, the social one you've worked hard to build over the years.

Many of us don't realize it's there. The armor holds the real self in check. What's calling out, underneath the clanking and squeaking, is your authentic self. Once the rusty metal's removed, anything in life as relationship becomes available to you.

Second, are you catching on to yourself in this conversation? It is only when we begin to see things outside our normal view of self, do other opportunities become available to us. Without a new view, we're destined to keep the edge that cuts into relationships.

Many of us believe we are in command-control of our environments. And it's not until we experience a breakdown, crisis or trauma that shakes the foundation of our entire world that we listen differently. The experience could be the loss of a loved one, a change in work status, or shift in a relationship. In any case, the event snaps us back into reality where the proverbial steering wheel has fallen off the car while it's in motion.

Under these circumstances, our natural inclination is to change the environment around us. And no matter how much we try, it is a lost cause. In reality, we possess only the capacity to change what is inside of ourselves.

And third, invariably, you'll experience a struggle between the satisfaction of doing what keeps you comfortable and the discomfort of stretching the boundaries of what's possible for you in any relationship. But remember, this struggle isn't anything new. It's a natural part of the transformation because it requires a shift away from your present view. And we tend to resist anything unfamiliar.

If living with the same view of the world no longer serves your purpose, you'll have to give up living in the benefits of your story. Insights can offer a powerful point of view for you, but just knowing alone doesn't lead to action.

Over the summer, I invite you to consider what's available for you to work the boundaries of your relationships. We are free to choose and be whatever we want. I wish you and your family a summer filled with many pleasant surprises.

Darryl W. Hewitt, Ph.D.