

## **Couples, Communication and Kinesiology**

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Communication is essential in the quest for peace, harmony, efficiency, satisfaction and in affording a lasting quality relationship. This is true for nations, religious groups, government agencies, family members and certainly as well for couples.

Miscommunication is more commonly encountered than good communication especially when one or both parties is under stress. Who among us has not experienced the sad event of loss of communication under stress? This problem is universal regardless of education, culture, gender, or station in life.

Understanding what it is that blocks communication and the use of kinesiology in regaining effective communication is precisely what this presentation is all about.

Now, the format that is most comfortable for me is one of demonstration - an experiential process rather than a didactic lecture. This method is much the same as I use in my daily practice with couples. For some reason this work with couples has in recent years become a large part of my practice. This brings to mind the adage, "We teach what we need to learn." My wife, Phyllis, would possibly approve of that quotation. First, I have two questions to ask of each of you

This works best for me with a male and female kinesiologist working together as co-facilitators so I am now going to ask Renate Kraft of Basel to come up here and join me. Now, I ask for a couple to volunteer and come forward at this time - a couple who wish to improve their communication skills.

Thank you for your courage in coming forward.

First - I have two questions that I would like to be answered by each of you.

1. What would you like to happen in the time you are up here together?

2. What would you like different in your life together?

Now I listen to the answers. Does each answer the questions asked?

I repeat what I heard in the answer and check that I have heard correctly. This may appear to be tiresome but actually is basic to this exercise. Making assumptions as to the meaning of the remarks of the other is an all too common pitfall leading to miscommunication. So the watchword is ASSUME NOTHING. Prior to responding from what is within myself, I first confirm what I have understood the other to have said. This is to be certain that I have heard correctly. Only then I proceed with my input.

Let me digress for a moment to suggest why I hold this exercise to be of such importance.

We all come together with the accumulated experience of our lives to that point in time. This collected experience, with its highs and lows, its joys and its sorrows results in what can be called an "attitude" relative to the experience of the moment. We relate to the other on the background of this "attitude". Some one once said "attitude" is more important than the facts, look and listen. Furthermore, we may not be aware of this "attitude" and even more probable is that the other is even less likely aware of this attitude. What a setting for miscommunication, confusion, distrust, suspicion and disharmony. This attitude with its source hidden from the other and often from ourselves is the energy driving us apart. What we can do to improve this state of affairs is what is to follow.

This often hidden energy is what drives our response. This is often a somewhat

bewildering, frustrating and irritating situation for the one who has just spoken. This is the place to stop, look and listen. Seek clarification. Ask, "What did you hear me say?". You might say, "May I check with you to see if I heard you correctly?"

Can you see how it is that miscommunication is so common, especially when we are stressed? I suggest this is preferable to responding to what you feel you heard. What we feel we heard is all too often provoking a response in us that is defensive polarizing, even attacking - all very inflammatory. These "gut" responses when regularly repeated can result in isolation, distancing, bedlam, and in the extreme a rupture of the relationship. Is this what we want?

Perhaps this is a good point to stop and see just what it is that we want? Remember, ASSUME NOTHING. "I want a closer more loving, intimate, passionate, harmonious relationship with X." MT (Muscle Test).

If this tests weak, you might go on with, "I am not sure that I want a closer, more loving, intimate, passionate harmonious relationship with X." MT

Should this test weak, this opens up a very different line of questioning, and so we proceed with questions to uncover just why the person is unsure such a relationship is wanted. You might ask just how we know to go in this direction. Actually the clue for the needed direction is provided by the patient. **The job of the kinesiologist is to be in touch with himself and in touch with the client or patient.** To me, being focused on a complex structure or methodology is a hindrance to this "being in touch". I prefer to work with a very simple method and some basic principles of kinesiology as I am attempting to demonstrate here. Returning to the process at hand - why I am unsure of wanting such a relationship.

I am unsure because of:

something I heard or saw in a book or a movie MT

something I saw in the life of others MT  
or something I experienced in my own life MT

If something in my own life:

with this person here before me MT

with a relationship with a friend MT

with someone in my family MT

If in the family holds

in the family of origin MT

in my present family MT

If family of origin holds

in my own generation MT

in the older generation MT

in the twice older generation MT

If in the older generation holds

male MT

female MT

mother MT

father MT

MT as appropriate

What is most often found is that the blocks to having the desired relationship are coming not from the present situation at all. "We all come to our present relationship with a collection of fears, angers and resentments from the past. What we have in our present relationship is the opportunity to remove these blocks from the past and to get on with our lives." -after Hendricks

As we consider communication difficulties between individuals what I often find to be of great help is to first establish the purpose of our communication efforts. That is, to establish that our objective is to have a dialogue rather than a debate.

This is so basic, but unfortunately is lost sight of in the heat of the moment when there is conflict. Now, conflict is not really the problem. It is natural to have conflict because we are all somewhat different. Each of us views the world from a perspective that is factored by the accumulation of all our experience to that moment in time and this attitude is naturally different for each of us. I repeat - CONFLICT IS NOT THE PROBLEM. Tools, or BEING WITHOUT THE TOOLS to resolve conflict is more the problem.

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What follows now is some thoughts in progress about DIALOGUE VS. DEBATE.

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### DIALOGUE

The goal of dialogue is increased understanding of myself and others

I listen with a view toward understanding.

I listen for strengths so as to affirm and learn.

I speak for myself from my own understanding and experience.

I ask questions to increase understanding.

I allow others to complete their communications.

I concentrate on others' words and feelings.

I accept others' experiences as real and valid for them.

I allow the expression of real feelings (in myself and others) for understanding and catharsis.

I honor silence.

### DEBATE

The goal of debate is the successful argument of my position over that of my opponent.

I listen with a view toward countering what I hear.

I listen for weaknesses so as to discount and devalue.

I speak based on assumptions made about others' positions and motivations.

I ask questions to trip up or confuse.

I interrupt or change the subject.

I focus on my own next point.

I critique others' experiences as distorted or invalid.

I express my feelings to manipulate others; I deny their feelings as legitimate.

I use silence to gain advantage.

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Once we have established that the two persons involved are actively moving toward better communication and have their goal of a more harmonious, mutually satisfying relationship (this confirmed by muscle test) we review the above contrasts between dialogue and debate.

Now we can engage in the exercise of communication between the two. We begin

with one stating what he would like different in the relationship. This person speaking is on send and hopefully the other, the listener, is on receive.

The kinesiologist monitors the communication and intervenes when appropriate