

BULLET POINTS

How to Talk to Your Partner

Last month we talked about how to talk to the press...this month we're focusing a little closer to home, with a summary of an excellent session from this year's Morning Show Bootcamp -- Joseph Grenny's "Tools for Talking". This information can be very useful in helping you resolve conflicts with other show or staff members.

Grenny says that almost all conflict in the world today, whether it be one-on-one or nation-on-nation is the result of a "critical conversation" that needs to happen. These conversations are usually difficult, with one or both parties to a relationship needing to address a major issue of potential disagreement.

Whether it is you needing to talk to your wife about how you are going to treat your child's ADD or President Bush talking with Ariel Sharon about how he is going to dismantle settlements, nothing happens until the conversation takes place. These conversations can be unpleasant and even compound the problem. Grenny talked about some ways to make these conversations happen successfully.

Miscommunication and frustration are most frequently the result of the wrong "level" of communication that needs to happen. There are three conversation levels:

1. **Content/Issue Conversations**—this has happened one time and I don't like it.
2. **Pattern Conversations**—this has happened several times, we have talked, why is it not changing?
3. **Relationship Conversations**—this has happened many times and now threatens our relationship.

The example Grenny used was his kid on the porch. He asked his son to wait on the porch while he went inside. When he came out, his kid was across the street. Grenny thinks that frequently parents and kids get frustrated because they are not having the correct conversation.

If this is the first time the kid has run across the street then the conversation needs to be about this specific issue, "hey, I asked you to wait on the porch. I'm upset that you didn't and could have been hurt. Please don't do that again the next time I ask."

A less effective conversation in this instance would be one bringing up a lot of unrelated issues instead of focusing on the issue at hand -- the kid straying from the porch. Talking about messy bedrooms, hitting his sister last week, etc., will make the conversation less effective by putting the kid on the defensive for unrelated issues and likely shut him down to fixing this particular issue.

If running off the porch is a pattern, then talking about it as though it were an isolated issue is not as effective as “hey, I thought we had talked and agreed that I could trust you to wait on the porch when I asked you to? What have I got to do to get you to live up to what you say you are going to do? I want to trust you and treat you like the big kid you want to be, but I can’t when you say you’ll do one thing then do another.”

If the behavior is persistent then the appropriate conversation would be “You don’t seem to care about my feelings, I’ve told you before how worried I am that you could be hit by a car, I apparently can’t trust you to do what you say you are going to do so I am no longer going to be able to let you hang out on the porch by yourself.”

When you need to have a “critical conversation” think first about what level of conversation you need to have. Having a critical conversation about losing trust the first time your partner embarrasses you on the air or having a conversation about a specific instance for a recurring problem is not as effective at resolving the problem. Grenny recommends taking a moment to think about what level of conversation you need to have with your boss, wife, husband, or on-air partner before you have the conversation.

Critical conversations are best when you are 100% candid while remaining 100% respectful. Failing at either makes the chances of a successful resolution less.

Sugarcoating the problem and running from or ignoring the problem won’t solve it and usually makes the situation worse.

People become defensive not because of what you’re saying, but their suspicions of why you are saying it. Successful resolution of interpersonal conflict is increased exponentially when you can make the person feel like you have their best interests at heart and truly want to understand where they are coming from. Make the people around you feel safe and they will hear your message and react more positively.

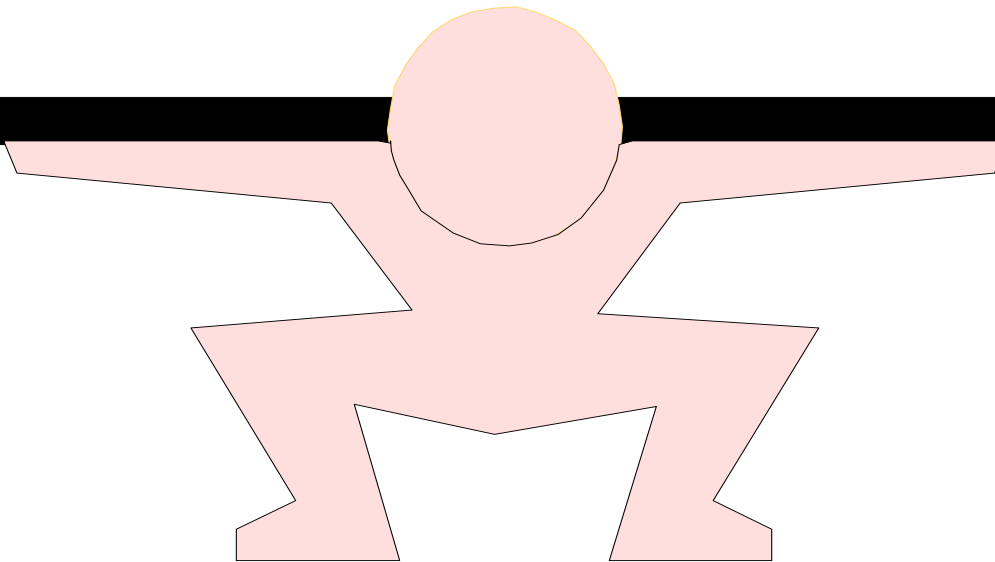
Programming Nugget:

The Fall rating period has just begun. One of the best ways to get ready for a major rating period is to pretend you were just hired to be the new PD. Take a look at everything as if you were a brand new programmer just starting. What definitely works right at your station (song rotations, promotions, special programming, etc.), what could use improving or a facelift, and what needs to be discarded? Think like a new PD and take a critical look at your station. If you were a new PD looking at your station, what would you change?



Multi-tasking is a sure fire way to lower the quality of every task you're doing at any one time. This is particularly true for on-air performance (e.g. thinking about what question or comment you're going to make next rather than listening to the person talking). We've all been on the phone with someone who's distracted and half into the conversation while they scan their email.

“Doing one thing at a time” is how one Zen Master defines the essence of Zen. Doing one thing at a time means to be total in what you do, to give it your complete attention. Practice doing one thing at a time with your full attention and watch the quality and value of your performance of whatever you're doing rise to the top. You may be surprised that you actually get more done in the process.



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