
talking about...

... designing better relationships for better outcomes

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Talking About Pty Ltd

Resistance

"A little tact and wise management may often evade resistance, and carry a point, where direct force might be in vain."

... Author Unknown

Human beings have long been aware of the notion of resistance. No matter whether we look at it from a social or scientific perspective, resistance speaks to the need to overcome. In order to overcome resistance, we need to supply more energy or power than provided by the resistance. A simple example can be seen in the flow of electricity through a wire. The energy finally transmitted involves a calculation of the initial energy and the impact of the resistance of the wire.

All very interesting you might say, but what has this got to do with people and their effectiveness? Well, human beings by their nature have two fundamental dispositions to life. They seek to conserve and protect what they have and they also seek to expand and create something new. We all have these tendencies; however each of us has them to different degrees. Some people are very conservative and seek to nearly always protect the status quo. Other people are very expansive and nearly always seek to create something new. Most of us fit somewhere in the middle. Hence, whenever we are confronted with a situation, we will engage on the basis of our desire to conserve what we have or construct something new based on a wide range of factors that we do not have space to elaborate on here. If we come from a conserving point of view about a certain situation we initially resist any change and therein lays an opportunity to be more effective in life.

We are constantly dealing with situations where our and others' predisposition to conserve or construct is called into play. The way in which an issue is brought to someone is one of the critical factors in their response to it. As Coaches, over and over again we observe people who inadvertently create resistance in others by the way they conversations with them. They then have to overcome that resistance to move forward. Here is a simple example.

Kelly is Jane's manager and comes to her with an issue she would like Jane to deal with. She begins the conversation by telling Jane about the issue and then what she thinks would be the best solution. Jane has seen similar situations before and believes a different path forward is warranted. However, as a result of the way in which Kelly brings the issue to Jane, she now is on the back foot. She doesn't want to say no to Kelly but is also not keen about the solution Kelly is proposing. She is in a state of resistance and her private thoughts, which she does not share with Kelly include "What would she know?" and "She doesn't think I can think for myself". Because Kelly has provided an answer for Jane that she does not support, Jane will only acquiesce to Kelly's request because of the authority of Kelly's position. It may well be that Jane's solution is better, but Kelly will never hear it because of the resistance she created at the start of the conversation.

In our next edition, we will explore how to have conversations that minimise conversational resistance and therefore increase effectiveness. Until then, we invite you to look at how much resistance you create and feel in conversations with others. You can listen to it in the negative thoughts you have and the objections you hear from others. You will be amazed at how much resistance occurs.

"Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility."

... Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Inner Strength ...

If you can start the day without caffeine,
If you can get going without pep pills,
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can ignore a friend's limited education and never correct him,
If you can resist treating a rich friend better than a poor friend,
If you can conquer tension without medical help,
If you can relax without liquor,
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,

... Then you are probably the family dog!

"The more deeply you understand other people, the more you will appreciate them. To touch the soul of another human being is to walk on holy ground."

... Stephen Covey

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