

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Motivation, Correction, & Guidance."

HELPING OTHERS IMPROVE

When was the last time someone exhibited behaviors that you believed really needed to be changed? Perhaps it was a person whose productivity was very low because they spent too much time socializing. Maybe they said things that were inappropriate or had a contagiously negative attitude. Maybe they were unreliable, not fulfilling commitments, arriving late at work, leaving early, or refusing to take the time to learn a new critical skill.



Unless you work alone, there is most likely at least one person in your work life that you believe needs to change. Are you helping him/her through the change, or have you given up because in the past you were unsuccessful?

Anyone can be a positive force for change in the lives of others. The following are some examples of effective approaches:

One at a time. Pick a particular behavior to start with, and limit your focus to just that behavior.

Develop the relationship. Start slow. Allow time for a positive relationship to develop, so that the individual will appreciate your interest. Invest time in the individual, doing things in which he/she is interested. In the beginning, this may be very difficult if you have developed distaste for his/her presence.

Praise. Pay attention to behaviors that are in the direction of those desired and let the person know precisely what they did and how it benefited the company, coworkers, themselves, or you. For some, this is best done in private, while for others, it is best done in front of an audience.

Corrective discussion. When the person exhibits a strongly negative version of the targeted behavior, discuss it with him/her in private, in an open friendly manner, and without criticism. These discussions should be limited and preceded by previous praise discussions.

Set the example. Demonstrate the

behavior that you want the individual to emulate, which can also lead to self-improvement.

Reinforcement games. Create a game between the two of you. For example, if cursing is the behavior to change, create a competition where the offender puts a quarter in the jar every time they say a curse word. Do it on the honor system. When the jar gets full or no one curses for two weeks, do something together to spend the money.

There are three keys to success when applying the above techniques to help others change: consistency, understanding the individual, and paying attention to opportunities. When we consistently find and take advantage of opportunities for rewards and encouragement, consistently demonstrate the behavior we wish to see in others, and consistently use our understanding of other people, we can help those around us achieve their greatest potential. And in the process, we pursue our own greatest potential.

IN THE NEWS

Our CEO Helps with Peace Initiative in Ireland



Beverly Inman-Ebel travels to Ireland September 11th. She is one of four women from the U.S. on a mission funded by the State Department to help support the Peace Initiative. Beverly will meet with business owners, organization leaders, and government officials to get business owners of Ireland and Northern Ireland doing business with each other.

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I greatly enjoyed the course and feel that TLC has had a positive impact on our organization."

Kyle Harrison, Atlanta GA



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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ◆ The October issue of the Exchange focuses on Facilitating Meetings.

LOOKING BACK:

- ◆ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ◆ Re-read the [August 2003](#) edition: Giving Corrections & Guidance.

See everything; overlook a great deal; correct a little.

Pope John XXIII



Helpful Hints:

- If you have had a misunderstanding with someone in the past, ask that person to paraphrase what you have just agreed to.
- Some questions do not deserve an answer, especially those that will cause trouble no matter how you answer them.

There are two kinds of light - the glow that illuminates, and the glare that obscures.

James Thurber



To learn more about it, click here!

NO SURPRISES

When expectations are clearly stated, there are no surprises when a correction is given. When an assignment is given, be sure to act like a reporter and give the

- Who
- What
- Where
- When

Approximately 40% of the population will also want to know "How" and at least 18% will want to know "Why." Giving clear directions can diminish the amount of corrections needed.

When a correction is warranted, immediately do your homework to determine the cause. Let the individual know that you need to talk with him or her and inform the person of the nature of the discussion. It is best and fair for both parties to be informed and prepared. Conduct the correction in private. Defensiveness is likely to be less if there is not an audience.

Begin with asking a question even if you know the answer. Be sure to ask an open question because the purpose is to give the offender a chance to describe what happened. Often during this answer, the individuals will correct themselves and then you can be spared needing to give a correction.

If this does not happen, be prepared to informatively state the consequences to the action, making sure to focus upon the action rather than the person who committed the action. If you are a friendly boss, this step will be very helpful because it keeps the talk centered upon behavior rather than people. This lessens the defensiveness.

The third step is to ask another open question that focuses on solutions. By allowing the person to talk, it lessens the defensiveness. It also allows for that person to find the solution, which he or she will surely follow more than a suggestion by someone else. Using this method, you can determine if the person is capable of self-correcting. If the person is not able to do this, you will need to give more detailed instructions the next time you give directions.

So follow the "Ask-Tell-Ask" formula for corrections and remove the surprises, especially the bad ones, from corrections.



THE OPEN DOOR

By Ben Cairns, M.A.



At TLC we have what can easily be termed a "work family." We have shared in each other's successes, been there for each other when parents died, people got married,

and children were born. The amount of respect and admiration that I have for my colleagues here is inestimable. I have learned, grown, and matured in many ways from my experiences with these wonderful people.

Sometimes an unexpected event creates the need to make hard decisions and changes. A few months ago while I was in Atlanta on business, my daughters and wife were sitting on the couch drawing pictures. Sarah, my four-year old, drew a picture of one big girl and two small ones. "This is our family," she proclaimed. "But, where is daddy?" my wife asked. "Oh, we are a family without a daddy, because our daddy lives in a hotel in Atlanta," was her response.

My wife and I have done everything that we could to help Sarah understand why daddy is sometimes away. She had been having trouble with that for over a year. But Sarah's picture was something that I just could not get out of my mind, and was the unexpected event that prompted me to reconsider what I have been doing as a husband and father. The time had unexpectedly come for me to pursue a long-time dream, owning a business. After a lot of investigation, I have decided to start a home-based company that will broker business equipment leases.

While with TLC, I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to work with some of the most capable people in America (and Europe). For this I am grateful. I have put my heart and soul into helping people improve their communication skills, improve their relationships, build new relationships, repair damaged relationships, double their sales and income, resolve conflicts, and live their lives more fully.

I used to think that the people we work with have meant more to me than they understood. When our clients (friends) at one company found out that I was leaving, they took me to a very nice lunch and threw a farewell party.

Continued on page 3

EGGING ON



How often have you coerced someone into doing something they did not want to do by egging him/her on? We know that being egged on does not have anything to do with having eggs thrown on us. What it does mean is to persuade or

verbally push someone into doing something. So, where did this popular idiom originate?

The answer is surprising. Use of the word "eggs" in the expression is actually a misuse of the word "ecgs." According to the British, "ecgs" were the points of spears used by Norman Invaders. The spear tip was used to "ecg" or "edge" someone over a cliff or side of a boat. To push someone "over the edge" or "ecg (egg) them on" meant to poke them until..., well you know the rest.

Though we don't currently use spear tips to get a person to do something, there are some pretty sharp words or actions that can be used to negatively motivate people. For positive motivation techniques, be sure to read the front-page article in this issue of The Exchange. Without anyone having to "egg you on," practice positive behaviors that motivate others.

THE OPEN DOOR, cont.

They told me what my work had meant to them, and I now know that they understood all along!

TLC is in the process of developing several new lines of service that will meet a wider range of client needs. This is an exciting and wonderful time for TLC, and for our clients. For me, it is also a bittersweet experience to be heading out at this time. I will always be in touch with my "family" at TLC. I have an "open door," should I wish to return. You will occasionally see a newsletter article from me. And, I will be around to support them during the important events in their lives. I can always be reached through TLC for any of you who wish to contact me. I wish all of you the very best that life has to offer and encourage you to continue improving your communication!

BEGIN WITH GUIDANCE IN MIND

Managers who scold, counsel, and correct as a first-line method of getting employees to do their jobs are now called "old school." It's hard to believe that many managers still persist in the belief that walking softly and whacking their employees with a big stick is the best way to manage. It is much better to begin with guidance in mind.

Guidance is a method of helping employees learn to take right courses of action without letting things get to the point where counseling or correction is necessary. Since guidance works best before any major mistakes are made, managers need to be aware of what and how employees are doing. Guidance works like a gentle nudging back on course.

When an employee asks you how to do something, use 'requesting responses' to encourage their critical thinking. A 'requesting response' is a question that you ask in response to their question.

- **Ask** for a status update, what has been done, what the perception is, and what is planned.
- **Tell** the correct information or the right way to do something.
- **Ask** for solutions and to test the new perception or what is planned for the next time a similar situation occurs.

Keep your emotions in control and see how quickly you can help your employees to improve their performance without fear. Give guidance early instead of waiting for things to get bad enough for corrective action to be required. Your employees will be more open with you and more satisfied with their jobs.

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I have been promoted to manager and love everything about my job except correcting people. Some of these people are my friends and I am quite uncomfortable judging them. Not Judge Judy

Dear Judy,

Don't judge them; rather, ask them to judge their own behavior. Be prepared to tell them the consequences of their current behavior. Finally, ask them how the situation can be resolved in the future.



Remember to...

- **Ask "How" or "What" questions to get people started talking.**
- **Slowly nod your head to show you are listening.**

The best way to succeed in life is to act on the advice we give to others.

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

Marian Wright Edelman



It is better to advise than to upbraid, for the one corrects the erring; the other only convicts them.

Epictetus

You've got to accentuate the positive

Eliminate the negative

Latch on to the affirmative

Don't mess with Mister In-between

Johnny Mercer

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CEO CORNER: "Being Direct"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

I have internal battles between my direct side and my tender heart. In August, an elderly man stopped by the office offering to clean the stucco exterior walls of our building. I happened to be in the front office and stepped outside to negotiate the deal. I decided to have him clean the office and a small segment of my home.

Because the entire staff was leaving that afternoon to attend a funeral of a parent of a co-worker, I left the man a check in a pre-determined place outside of the building. When I returned, the check was gone and so was the elderly gentleman. Unfortunately, the work was not completed as promised. At mid-day the next day, the worker returned stating that he had also finished the work at my home. I told him I would check it and would need to be satisfied before I gave him my personal check. I also pointed out some stains left on the office walls. I drove home and found the north wall of my house was still green with mildew. Now I had the information I needed and was prepared for the correction.

When the older man returned at five o'clock, I met him outside in the parking lot. I asked him how he thought he had done the job at my house. He replied that it looked great. I very informatively described where the mildew was still attached to the walls. He said he would finish it tomorrow but needed his check tonight. I replied that I would pay when the job was complete. He asked me, "Don't you trust me? I'll be up there first thing in the morning."

My heart tugged because I realized that this man probably needed the money. I loosened the personal bond and ignored the question that was a trap by stating, "Mr. Smith, I am comfortable paying for services when they are completed according to our verbal agreement." He asked when I would be home and then promised to have it ready

by then.

About thirty minutes after I arrived home, following some additional instructions from me, I finally paid him and sent him on his way. I decided that I would get expectations in writing in the future. Don, our Office Manager then, and now our new Sales Manager, decided that I was not allowed to be in the front office alone anymore.

When we make mistakes and do not clearly set expectations, at least we can give correct corrections. Be clear. Be direct. Care. Live your dreams!



GOODBYE TO BEN CAIRNS

After nearly six years with TLC, Ben Cairns has left to pursue his dreams of owning his own equipment leasing business. We will miss his attention to detail, creativity, and delightful sense of humor. Richard Bach wrote, "Do not be dismayed at goodbyes. A farewell is necessary before we can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or lifetimes, is certain for those who are friends." Goodbye Ben!

FEATURED SERVICE: On-line Courses Available

TLC now has seventy-one courses available on-line. Topics range from 'Supervision' to 'Balancing Your Life.' Priced very reasonably at under \$100 per person for unlimited use for a whole year, this could be a solution for your team. Call Don Wheeler at TLC, 1-888-BECAUSE or 423-622-8255, for details and a free trial.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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